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Hafa Adai!

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Businesses heave big sigh of relief

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
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REPORTER

» As grace period for workers with pending CW renewals takes effect

Several establishments were hit hard on New Year's Day due to delays in the processing of the Commonwealth-only work permits, which expired last Dec. 31, losing manpower and temporarily closing down business operations.

But with the implementation of the 240-day grace period for CW workers with pending permits starting yesterday, most, if not all, are back to normal operations.

After more than a month, Shirley's Coffee Shop in Su-

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FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON

Shirley's Coffee Shop in Susupe is now open after more than a month of shutdown due to the delay of CW permit renewals. Most of their cooks are now able to return to work as the implementation of the 240-day grace period for workers who have pending renewals began.

AS 'ICE' REPORTEDLY FLOODING TINIAN STREETS

Tinian DPS director leads drug buy operations, 7 suspects fall

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Tinian Department of Public Safety director John Santos led police officers in the investigation of trafficking methamphetamine or "ice" on Tinian, resulting in the arrest of seven of eight suspects on Friday.

Arrested were Michael Borja Evangelista, 29; Kyle San Nicolas Cepeda, 25; Vicente G. Adriano, 58; Antonio Adriano, 38; Jay Barcinas San Nicolas, 34; Christopher Boki Evangelista, 53; and Jose Anthony Sablan, 45.

Jay San Nicolas is an employee of Tinian Mayor's Office, but assigned to Tinian Department of Public Works, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

The eighth suspect was identified as Frank Mendiola, who was not served with an

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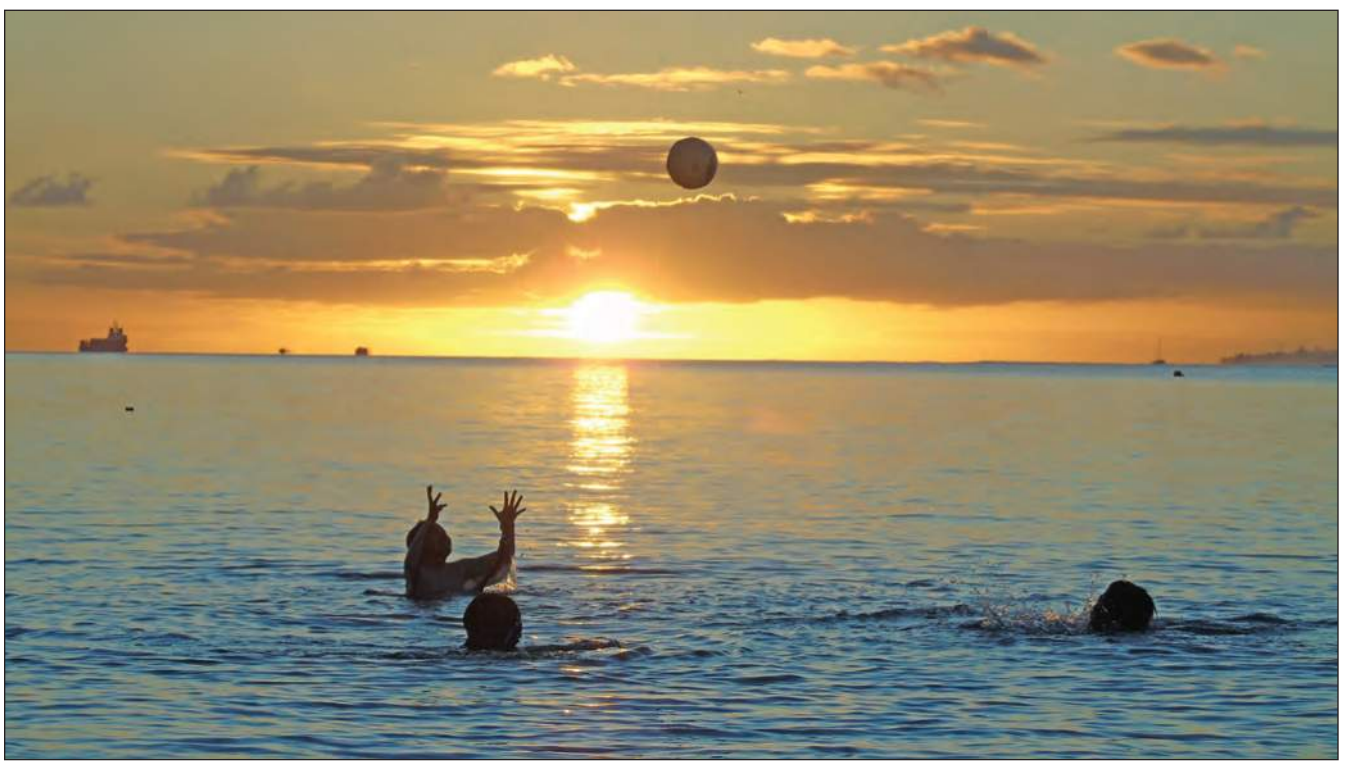

CATCH BALL

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

With the majestic sunset as backdrop, children play catch ball while swimming during a weekend picnic at Paupau Beach.

AS RETIREES STILL AWAIT 25 PCT PENSION PAYMENTS

Lawmakers attempt to cure ambiguity of governor's reprogramming authority today

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

The House and Senate have set emergency sessions for today, Wednesday, to pass measures intended to ensure the "legality" of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' authority to reprogram funds to pay CNMI retirees' 25 percent pension payments, according to Senate president Francisco Borja (Ind-Tinian) and House vice speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan).

The new measures come in the wake of the Settlement Funds' refusal, and returned check, last Friday, to pay off these pension payments using funds that Torres reprogrammed using his authority under last year's budget act and emergency powers extended throughout the months after Typhoon Soudelor and the fiscal crisis sustained after the massive network outage

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INSIDE

LOCAL

Former Saipan resident and visual artist Marconi Calindas' contribution to the Hearts in San Francisco Project by the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation fetched $50,000 even before the start of the live auction of the annual fundraiser.

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LOCAL

The Office on Aging's Man'amko Center celebrated Valentine's Day with its first ever prom-themed Sweetheart Ball.

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13 DAYS
CDMA SHUTDOWN
IS FEBRUARY 29
IT&E
Life In Motion

Local

US Armed Services committee to visit CNMI

U.S. Congressman Rob Wittman, chairman of the House Armed Services subcommittee on Readiness, wants to have dinner and meet with CNMI leaders and visit sites on Tinian intended for planned Department of Defense projects, after he arrives on Saipan this Friday, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

Wittman

The congressional delegation, or CODEL, led by Wittman and made up of Guam Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo, a ranking member of Wittman's subcommittee, and accompanied by committee staff and a military escort, wants to meet with the CNMI's Executive Branch, Tinian Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas, and lawmakers for their brief visit this weekend on Friday and Saturday.

Military and government officials have been communicating ahead of the visit to finalize a tentative schedule that right now sets Wittman's arrival at 5:30pm on Saipan Friday, Feb. 19, followed by an executive dinner, and meetings with local officials tentatively planned for the following day, Saturday.

The delegation also plans to head to Guam Saturday afternoon to U.S. Marine relocation sites and meet with Guam lawmakers and Guam Gov. Eddie Calvo later in the day. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

ON COURT JUDGMENTS VS GOVT, 2016 BUDGET ISSUES

Dotts to get testimony of various govt officials

»OAG to recommend Torres not to testify if subpoenaed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Attorney Michael Dotts, counsel for the parents of a baby who died during delivery in 2012 at the Commonwealth Health Center, will get the testimony of various government officials and staff in preparation of the hearing on the government's budget and other issues.

At a status conference yesterday, Dotts, counsel for Jotonia B. Aguon and Timothy Cruz, informed the Superior Court that he will conduct depositions of government officials and staffs.

Deposition refers to the taking of testimony of a witness outside of court.

Saipan Tribune learned that Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho will hold an evidentiary hearing from May 9 to 11, 2016.

Camacho allowed Dotts to file on or before March 14, 2016, a motion for the court to find that the 2016 government's budget is unconstitutional.

The government has until March 25, 2016, to file its opposition to the motion.

Assistant attorney general David Lochabay, counsel for the government, told the court that if Dotts will subpoena Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres to testify, he will move for the governor not to testify by exercising his executive privilege.

Camacho said the Office of the Attorney General should check with Torres first as maybe he wants to talk about the issue.

Attorney John Cool also appeared at the hearing as counsel for the House of Representatives.

Aguon and Cruz are holding a $35,000 judgment against the government over the death of their child. The couple brought up the issues in court on how to collect payments for court judgments against the government and the unbalanced 2016 budget.

Fire hits one room at Capital Hotel

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A fire of still unknown cause broke out at one of the rooms of Capital Hotel in Garapan on Saturday at noon.

No one was reported injured during the blaze, according to Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services spokesman Derek Gersonde yesterday.

Gersonde said DFEMS received a call from the Department of Public Safety's dispatch about a fire at a hotel in Garapan on Saturday at 12:16pm.

DEREK GERSONDE
A masked firefighter enters one of the rooms at Capital Hotel in Garapan, where a fire of still unknown cause broke out on Saturday at noon.

Firefighters and medics from Susupe and Garapan Fire Stations responded. The fire was placed under control at 12:34pm on that same day.

Investigators found that the fire started from the vent in the restroom in one of the rooms located on the first floor.

The restroom sustained severe heat and smoke damage, while the bedroom had moderate heat and smoke damage.

Gersonde said the affected room had guest/s at that time.

Gersonde said investigators are conducting further investigation to determine the cause of fire.

Last Thursday, a 3-year-old boy was injured during a fire that broke out at an apartment in Susupe.

Emergency medical technicians treated the child for minor injury to his finger at the scene.

Last Jan. 20, a car caught fire in front of Mount Carmel School in Chalan Kanoa, while another fire broke out at a shipping container at the old dumpsite in Puerto Rico.

Chamber to hold first Gitomer-certified training in Micronesia

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A "powerful" business seminar will be hosted by the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and Island Training Solutions tomorrow.

The two will hold the Jeffrey Gitomer Sales Training business seminar entitled "Little Red Book of Selling" facilitated by Saipan's very own Gitomer-certified speaker, Jim Arenovski.

According to Chamber executive director Jill Arenovski, they are excited to provide this opportunity to the CNMI as it will be the first-ever international sales training of this caliber to enter Micronesia.

"This is the first-ever Gitomer-certified training in Micronesia, and the Chamber is excited to help offer it to everyone," Arenovski said.

In "The Little Red Book of Selling" Seminar, business owners and their staff will gain knowledge on the powerful techniques of selling that will "launch their business into improved sales and customer relations."

They will be given the tools that they need to "attract, engage, and stay in touch with customers, make the sales, and more."

The seminar is for all sales people and whether they have been in the business for a short or long time, it acknowledges that there is a need to constantly return to the basics and strengthen their foundation.

The seminar will be held tomorrow, Feb. 18, at the Kanoa Resort from 8am to 4pm. All participants will receive breakfast and lunch as well as valuable and exclusive Gitomer training materials.

The cost is $349 per person for Chamber members, and $449 per person for non-Chamber members. For more information, call the Saipan Chamber of Commerce at (670) 234-7150 or email administator@saipan-chamber.com.

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Tenorio: Cultivate CNMI tourism

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

»Tourism industry should prepare for upcoming developments

After more than two decades of service to the CNMI's tourism industry, managing director Perry Tenorio will leave the Marianas Visitors Authority on March.

Having been able to serve the industry for 21 years, Tenorio said he was proud to be part of the team who convinced the federal government about the CNMI's need for visa waiver programs for the Chinese and Russian travelers.

"I was very proud to be part of that process, when the CNMI was federalized from our own immigration system to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. When they had introduced the draft Guam-CNMI visa waiver program, they had planned China and Russia was excluded from that. And one thing that the MVA did, in collaboration with the board directors and the industry people, was we argued the economic importance of Chinese and Russians to the CNMI. And as a result, we are still enjoying that parole authority," Tenorio said.

Tenorio also experienced the worst of times for the CNMI's tourism industry which is now bouncing back.

"During the period that I came in, we were right around our lowest period in terms of the travel industry. I'm very glad that we're able to see increase in hotel occupancy, and increase in average room rates. Also very proud to be part of that," Tenorio said.

For Tenorio, the CNMI should further cultivate tourism on the islands.

"We had other industries on island but this is the one that still remains. I think it's something that the CNMI should consider cultivating because it's a clean industry," Tenorio said.

To do this, Tenorio said two things must be done, to promote to people to come here and prepare facilities that will cater to the tourists.

"The local part would be enhancing our destination, which MVA continues to do," Tenorio said.

Tenorio said MVA values the balanced distribution of visitors from the various markets in Asia such as the Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese and that they are working on revive visitors from Japan as well as looking at other possible markets.

"Diversification is very healthy for the industry," Tenorio said, "Russia is always at the back of our minds. Unfortunately, the devaluation of the Russian ruble has made it very expensive for Russians to travel to dollar-based destinations like the CNMI."

"What we're hoping to also expand to would be Taiwan. We'd like to see more Taiwanese visitors to come to the CNMI," he added.

Tenorio also noted that there are opportunities of bringing in tourists from European countries.

"Definitely we have some opportunity of linking them to the CNMI, maybe via Philippines with PAL Express, but that's something that we need to look at. It would have to be almost a two-country destination," Tenorio said.

While he will be leaving MVA on March 25, Tenorio hopes that the tourism industry as well as its partners will be prepared for the upcoming developments in the commonwealth.

"We see a lot of opportunities coming up. We see increase developments of hotels. We have Kensington that will be opening in June. We also have Honest Profit and Grand Mariana. What we need to do is prepare for it," Tenorio said.

"We need to have dialogues with the [Commonwealth] Ports Authority to make sure that our facilities are able, the airport is able to handle more flights. Although we are seeing more trends of the larger wide-body planes coming in, I think eventually the right fit for the CNMI is narrow-body. If we have narrow-body planes, then we will have more frequency," he added.

FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
After 21 years of service to the tourism industry, Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio will be leaving his position on March 25.

World War II ordnance removed from Saipan port

An all clear was issued for the Port of Saipan after the discovered unexploded ordnance was removed.

The World War II ordnance was removed before noon yesterday, according to the ports office.

Press secretary Ivan Blanco confirmed to *Saipan Tribune* the removal of the ordnance, adding that it was brought to the Marpi area for detonation.

Blanco said that, according to U.S. Coast Guard, the unexploded ordnance was about 500 lbs.

Last Friday, an area of the port was closed temporarily after the ordnance was found by a contractor, which was digging for the pipeline project for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

It initially affected delivery of imports including fuel but it also resolved and the port was back to normal Saturday morning.

After reporting to Sector Guam, a Unified Command was assembled which is led by CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the U.S. Coast Guard. The UC coordinated the deployment of a specialized U.S Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment from Guam. ***(Frauleine Villanueva-Dizon)***

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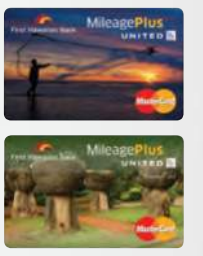

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Guam/Saipan	**Hong Kong**	Economy starting at $538	2 Days	30 Days	FHB16A	01 Feb 16 – 31 May 16 or 16 Sep 16 – 14 Dec 16	02 Mar 16
		Business starting at $1933	NIL	12 Months		01 Feb 16 – 31 Dec 16	
Guam/Saipan	**Palau**	Economy starting at $525	2 Days	30 Days	FHB16A	01 Feb 16 – 31 Dec 16	02 Mar 16
		Business starting at $1035	NIL	12 Months			

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For United ticketing agent, refer to CORE Reservations > Promos and Communications > FHB.

LAWMAKERS

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last July.

The Settlement Fund, citing its duties as an extension of the U.S. district court, believes this continued reprogramming authority "is not appropriate," that the funds serve no "public purpose," and have asked for an "authorized appropriation."

Lawmakers and administration officials disagree, however, and have drafted measures, with the help of the Attorney General's Office, to guarantee that this dispute, which left over 3,000 retirees bereft of their expected payments last Friday, does not happen again.

The new measures "will allow the governor to use his reprogramming authority to pay for the 25 percent" pension, vice speaker Deleon Guerrero told reporters yesterday.

Another bill "will legalize what the Ad Litem [Trustee Joyce Tang] claimed was an illegal payment," added Deleon Guerrero.

The bill will legalize "what was sent over there [to the Fund]. And any future payments from that source would be legal," Deleon Guerrero said. This "would accommodate the Ad Litem's concerns."

He confirmed the bills would be acted on today, in the emergency session set for this morning.

'Cure ambiguities'

One draft bill, copies of which were obtained by *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, "specifically authorizes" the governor to reprogram Executive Branch appropriations to pay for the 25 percent pension payments.

The draft bill reiterates the position of Capitol Hill officials that funding for the 25 percent pension payments serves "a public purpose" for which the governor can reprogram funds, a position that the Settlement Fund has disputed in letters to the governor.

"This Act is intended to remove any doubt," the draft bill states.

The second draft bill, copies of which were also obtained by *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, says there is a "need to clarify that taxes allocated" to the Settlement Fund may be used to fund the 25 percent pension payments.

Current law moves 20 percent of funds collected from hotel occupancy taxes and 30 percent of funds collected beverage container taxes to the Settlement Fund, and provides that the money may be used to fund benefit increases provided under public law.

After funding these benefits, the taxes may be applied to any unfunded obligation the Commonwealth has to fund.

The draft bill amends current law "to specify that taxes allocated to the Fund may be expended to fund retirees' 25 percent pension payments."

"This Act is intended to cure any ambiguities that there may be with regard to the Secretary of Finance's authority to apply taxes due to the Fund to fund" these payments, the bill states.

"To ensure that the law is consistent with the Legislature's intent to allow taxes to be sued for this purpose, the Legislature specifically finds that retroactive application of this Act is necessary and appropriate."

Borja told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that the House and Senate would be acting on the concerns of Tang.

"To ensure that she doesn't question anymore the money transferred," Borja explained. "That will clarify a lot of her concerns."

Borja believes they "have been doing [the reprogramming of funds] legally" but "to not further delay the disbursement" of the pension payments, they "want to meet half way" so it does not happen again.

Saipan and Northern Island Delegation lawmakers also passed a bill yesterday to, among others, provide the Torres administration with some $1.8 million to fund the pension payment shortfall.

However, this is seen as a stop-gap measure that lawmakers from both the upper and lower house believe could have been prevented with better communication and numbers between the Department of Finance, Legislature, and the Settlement Fund, which has been lamenting these concerns over the last year—or—an amendment to casino law to apply the annual license fee of $15 million in full to the 25 percent pension payment and ease the expected shortfall.

Capitol Hill officials appear to be unified on the "legality" of Torres' actions to provide for the retirees.

"I have yet to see a court order that it is illegal," said Rep. Antonio Sablan (Ind-Saipan), during a SNILD meeting yesterday. Sablan believes Torres' actions was not a question of whether there was money for funding as the amount provided was there, and that it was important for constituents to understand this.

"It is the position of our elected Attorney General that" the reprogramming "is within the scope of authority granted to" Torres under the budget act, Sablan said, and unless the reprogramming is "declared unconstitutional," "it is incumbent on the trustee," Joyce Tang, to disburse the money.

"We cannot subject our retirees to this every 15 days," Sablan added.

"The 25 percent portion of the pension of our retirees," Rep. Angel Demapan (R-Saipan) also said, "is clearly not under the jurisdiction of the settlement agreement entered into by the government and sanctioned by the Legislature."

"The 25 percent portion of the pension is a function of the NMI Retirement Fund, not the Settlement Fund," he added.

Remaining issues

The Settlement Fund has prioritized the importance of the 75 percent payments over the 25 percent.

Sen. Sixto Igisomar (R-Saipan), when asked if he agreed, said this "was true."

"The Settlement Fund does not care about anything else. They are obligated," he said. "[Tang's] position is that she is overseeing the 75 percent compensation obligation to retirees."

The 25 percent, on the other hand, is a commitment from the administration and the Legislature. "That is why the casino act went into play," Igisomar said, referring to the $15 million annual casino license fee allocated to these pension payments.

But Igisomar disclosed that the administration is considering "a change" in this process.

"If the Trustee is having potential issues with the 25 percent disbursement, [the administration] is saying they might as well take over, and handle the 25 percent disbursement themselves," Igisomar said.

He added this was an option to be "discussed further."

ERRATUM

In an article about the recent Mock Trial competition, it was reported that in history of the CNMI's performance in the nationals, MCS is the only team that has two national awards, once in 2008 for Letitia Cabrera's performance as a witness and again in 2010 for Anastasia Schweiger's performance as a witness. It was later learned that Nikita Mendiola of Tinian won the National Best Witness award in 2007 when Tinian High School represented the CNMI as well.

DPS

From Page 1

arrest warrant yet as of yesterday's bail hearing.

Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio imposed $50,000 cash bail each for all defendants, except Vicente Adriano.

Kim-Tenorio imposed $100,000 cash bail on Vicente Adriano because he was allegedly involved in two "ice" trafficking cases.

Police detectives stated in their reports that their confidential informant disclosed that the eight suspects are actively selling "ice" on Tinian.

Police said during a controlled buy operation last Jan. 6, their informant managed to buy $50 worth of "ice" from suspects Michael Evanglista, Cepeda, and Mendiola in front of Poker Club.

Police said their informant twice purchased "ice" worth $100 from Vicente Adriano at separate places last Jan. 26.

The confidential informant allegedly bought $50 worth of "ice" from Antonio Adriano last Jan. 24.

The informant allegedly managed to buy $50 worth of "ice" from Jay San Nicolas outside Cha Cha Poker last Feb. 4.

Police said their informant purchased $50 worth of "ice" from Christopher Evangelista last Feb. 1. Christopher Evangelista allegedly got the drugs from Vicente Adriano.

Director Santos and a detective conducted drug tests on the purchased substance and stated that the results came out presumptive positive.

Last November, Tinian DPS director Santos, Tinian Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas, and then-DPS commissioner James C. Deleon Guerrero disclosed during a press conference that "ice" has been flooding the streets of Tinian, devastating many families.

BUSINESSES

From Page 1

supe was finally able to open as the grace period began. They are back to their 6am to 10pm operations, while their Garapan branch is back to 24-hour operations.

According to their management, about 12 of their cooks have still yet to receive their renewed permits. Some of them were asked for requests for evidence. Most of their dining staff was able to receive their permits in early January.

"I would say I am thankful for [the grace period]. It's good that something was done but we lost so much already," manager Noelle Macario said. "It was too long of a break but we're glad to be back."

One salon in Garapan, which was closed since January, also just got back on its feet last week after receiving permits for most of their workers. At least two would be able to report for work because of the implementation of the grace period.

Vietnamese restaurant Truongs, which was closed down for a time, also was able to open earlier as they received all their permits even before the grace period implementation, according to Triple J human resources manager Frank Ada.

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. was also able to get about 20 of their affected power plant workers back to work around middle of January as their permits were processed.

Good news

The implementation of the grace period—which has been a long time coming—is welcome news to the business industry.

"A lot of establishments had to shut down operations because they didn't have any of their CWs but the grace period will allow them to resume operations while they receive their permits. It's a good thing for the economy and for the businesses themselves and for the workers because a lot of them were, I guess, in limbo," Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Velma Palacios told *Saipan Tribune*.

"[Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands] is of course very relieved that the 240-day grace period has started; it has been at least a year and half since we have heard of this regulation," HANMI chair Gloria Cavanagh said, "This will allow our members to continue business without disruptions as long as USCIS (U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services) is able to process a timely filed petition within this grace period."

Cavanagh said that as of the middle of last month, there have been few petitions that have not been processed and few that have request for additional information.

Palacios and Cavanagh both acknowledged Delegate Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (Ind-MP) for his work in getting the new rule enacted.

"A lot of this was also through the help of Congressman Kilili. He helped a lot with that and with the processing," Palacios said.

"We again like to thank Congressman Kilili and his office for their hard work," Cavanagh said.

Sablan, on the other hand, thanked USCIS for their cooperation.

"The enactment of the new rule allowing CW workers to continue working for 240 days while their timely-filed petitions are pending is good news for the Northern Marianas. I thank USCIS Director Leon Rodriguez for responding positively to my request to finalize this rule when he called me on Jan. 4, 2016. The rule, as you know, should prevent hardship to businesses and workers the next time petitions come up for renewal," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

He added that his office will continue to monitor the program as well as help the business community.

"The congressional office will continue to monitor implementation of the CW program, and we will continue providing our regular constituent services, including assisting individual employers in following up on pending CW petitions with USCIS," Sablan said.

In another response to Sablan, Rodriguez reported that the initial processing of the 2,800 Commonwealth-only (CW) worker applications, which expired Dec. 31 of last year was finished.

Of the total, 805 received RFEs and processing was said to resume as soon as USCIS is able to receive additional supporting documents from employers.

Future concerns

The business industry hopes that negative impacts for the CNMI's economy will now be avoided.

"With USCIS, I think if they just process in a timely manner all these applications, of course some exceptions are they need more request for information, but if they just process the CWs in a timely manner, I think it will help the businesses a lot," Palacios said.

Cavanagh hopes the grace period would be enough time for USCIS to process renewals in the future.

"If this grace period was implemented at the end of last year, it would have been sufficient time," Cavanagh said.

While disruptions to the CNMI's business operations may be avoided through the grace period, concerns on whether the CW cap for all the labor needs of the CNMI will also be enough.

"Going forward, we understand that there are increases in the number of CWs filed already. Our biggest concern now is whether the cap given to us by USCIS is enough for our existing businesses as well as our new investors," Cavanagh said.

"It will be interesting to see how petitions are prioritized and whether construction projects will be required to utilize the H visa process-

Triple J plans to expand Saipan operations

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Triple J Enterprises is expanding its business on Saipan with several establishments set to open within the year as they hope to join the growth of the local economy.

They held a one-day job fair, from 9am to 3pm, at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in Susupe yesterday in order to fill vacant positions for their projects on the island.

"I would say, that this is the Year of the Applicants," said Triple J Enterprises corporate director of human resource Francisco S. Ada Jr. with a laugh. "A lot of businesses are holding job fairs and it's a good indicator of the economy here."

"There's significant growth on Saipan and we need to find employees that would fit the qualifications we are looking for," Ada added.

"We're looking at no specific number but all applicants will undergo the screening process and we're going to review their qualifications. The more applicants, the better and larger pool to choose from."

Ada said that there has been a steady flow of applicants since yesterday morning. "People are coming in and were pleased with the turnout. By 11:30am we had already more than 50 applicants and candidates."

He added that they are just increasing the employment opportunities of capable workers and the job fair was open to all regardless of ethnicity, nationality, and race.

They will also be joining today's career fair by the Cooperative Education Program by the CNMI Public School System, a smaller version of their job fair.

"Triple J has several projects on Saipan and we will also have something different to offer with some of the new businesses that are going to open this year."

Surf Club Beach Bar, the former Pacific Gardenia, is set to open in the next two months and Ada said they want to recapture the fun beach atmosphere. They will also open a hotel under the Best Western brand, Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., and Outback Steakhouse.

"Bubba Gump and Outback are global brands and they have branches in major cities in the world including Guam and the Philippines. We want to bring that here on Saipan. And we're also looking to operate other potential restaurants here."

Bubba Gump is set to open within the next three months and it will be located at the building right across I Love Saipan where it would occupy the entire first floor.

"There are challenges with the opening being delayed but we do overcome them," added Ada.

Capricciosa, Tony Roma's, and Truongs are the restaurants that Triple J either owns or operates on Saipan.

JON PEREZ

Triple J Saipan Inc. construction operations manager and senior superintendent Mario Valentino, standing, assists some of the applicants who joined yesterday's job fair at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in Susupe.

Marianas Medical Center
is offering
NEW BORN SCREENINGS
to Medicaid patients
Screenings are every Tuesday and Wednesday from 8am-1:30pm.
No appointment needed.
Walk-ins accepted.
Clinic hours: M-F 8am-5pm; Sat 9am-4pm.
Contact us at 234-3925-28
Quality health care for your entire family!

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC doing business as Best Sunshine International respectfully announces the upcoming Public Hearing to present the laboratory results and to receive comments on the proposed sites to inter the artifacts and remains found at the Garapan site during the 2015 Archaeological Project.

Public Hearing # 1

February 23, 2015
6-8 pm
Multi-Purpose Center
Susupe

Public Hearing # 2

February 24, 2015
6-8 pm
Chaha Oceanview Middle School
Kagman

The public hearing will be conducted pursuant to the following rules:

1. All questions posed and comments made will be done in a respectful manner
2. Everyone is welcome to provide comments, however, all comments made at the public hearing will be limited to a maximum of 3 minutes.
3. Anyone wishing to provide additional comments or if anyone anticipates their comments will take longer than 3 minutes are encouraged to submit it in writing to the Historic Preservation Office.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Oleai, Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW/SWMD16-IFB-001

GROUNDWATER, LEACHATE, AND GAS TESTING AT THE MARPI SOLID WASTE FACILITY

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Victor B. Hocog, through the Department of Public Works, are soliciting sealed bids for the Groundwater, Leachate, and Gas Testing at the Marpi Solid Waste Facility, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project package will be available on or after February 10, 2016 at the office of the Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of Twenty-Five Dollars **($25.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer, and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at Lower Base Transfer Station.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001, under Article 7.

A mandatory Pre-bid Conference is scheduled for February 29, 2016, 09:00 a.m., local time, at the office of the Solid Waste Management Division, Lower Base Transfer Station.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matters relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that the full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 p.m. to **Mr. Enrique Dela Cruz, Director, Solid Waste Management Division,** Lower Base Transfer Station, Saipan or fax to (670) 322-2762. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who have obtained the invitation for bids from the office of the Solid Waste Management Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgement of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the Director of Solid Waste Management Division office at (670) 322-2745/2760 no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening.

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW/SWMD16-IFB-001."** For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Capitol Hill (formerly Emergency Management Office behind CHRB Postal Office), Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m., local time, March 28, 2016. Bidders located outside the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, March 28, 2016, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than March 28, 2016, and must be received no later than April 06, 2016. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be caused for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Capitol Hill (formerly Emergency Management Office behind CHRB Postal Office), Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, April 07, 2016. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:30 a.m. local time, on March 28, 2016.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **A surety company shall hold the Certificate of Authority (COA) from the U.S. Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General and must accompany the bid.** Bid security may be a Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660." If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with NMIAC §70-30.3-245 of the Procurement Regulations. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. The surety company providing the Performance and Payment bonds must hold a Certificate of Authority from the U.S. Department of Treasury as an acceptable surety and must be authorized to conduct business in the CNMI. In addition, the contractor will be required to deliver a certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments or other bond obligations) exceeded the penal amount of each bond. The contract to be awarded shall extend for a period of **two (2) years** from the date of Notice to Proceed issuance.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

JAMES A. ADA
Secretary of Public Works

HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply

Ex-firefighter says he's a drug addict, not pedophile

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saying he was a drug addict and not a pedophile, former firefighter Richard Sullivan Benavente is asking the federal court to sentence him the statutory mandatory minimum of 15 years instead of 30 years that the U.S. government and the U.S. Probation recommend.

In his sentencing memorandum filed in court on Monday, Benavente, through counsel Michael Dotts, said 15 years is still extremely harsh and represents the appropriate sentence.

Dotts said this case exemplifies the evils of drug use as both Benavente and the two minor girls involved in this case used drugs.

Dotts said both Benavente and the minors were exploited by Annette Basa.

The indictment charged Basa and Benavente of engaging in sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of two minors. Both defendants pleaded guilty.

» Defendant begs for 15 years imprisonment, not 30 years

In December 2014, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona slapped Basa with a sentence of 17.5 years in prison.

Benavente's sentencing will be on Feb. 22 at 9am.

Dotts said the fact remains that Benavente was a drug user whose judgment was impaired by the drugs he used, and who had sex with two underage prostitutes on a total of two occasions.

Dotts said Benavente legitimately may have believed that one of those minors was an adult.

"Nothing in the evidence suggests that Benavente sought out minor prostitutes," the lawyer pointed out.

Dotts said the defendant was presented with the opportunity to buy sex and there is no evidence that if the prostitutes had been adults he would have rejected them.

Dotts said the sex video recording was made with a cell phone and it has never been alleged that it was produced for distribution to pedophiles.

Dotts said unlike a pedophile, who targets minors or a person trying to make a profit by producing or distributing child pornography, Benavente was a drug addict whose judgment was impaired by his drug use and who had sex with underage prostitutes on only two occasions.

He said the video was made with a phone and was certainly for personal use and not distribution.

Dotts said Benavente is a first-time offender without a history suggesting that he had or would abuse children, or was a pedophile.

Dotts said because of the defendant's substantial assistance to, and cooperation with, the U.S. government, he's calling for a lower end of the sentencing guidelines range, or 15 years imprisonment.

NMHC to loan out $1M worth of funds

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A new loan program will be made available to Commonwealth residents from the Northern Marianas Housing Corp.

The NMHC board approved in its recent meeting the Housing Finance Loan Program, allowing for $1 million to be available for the loan.

"We have that $1 million to loan out for new construction, or you can purchase and rehabilitate, or just to rehabilitate your existing house," corporate director Jesse Palacios said.

According to Palacios, the $1 million, which comes from the corporation's own funds, will be divided between the three islands.

For Saipan, $500,000 will be allotted, while Tinian and Rota will get $250,000 each.

A $100,000 limit was set per loan agreement especially for new construction, which is higher than the maximum for their current HOME program, which has a limit of $57,000 plus $20,000 supplemental.

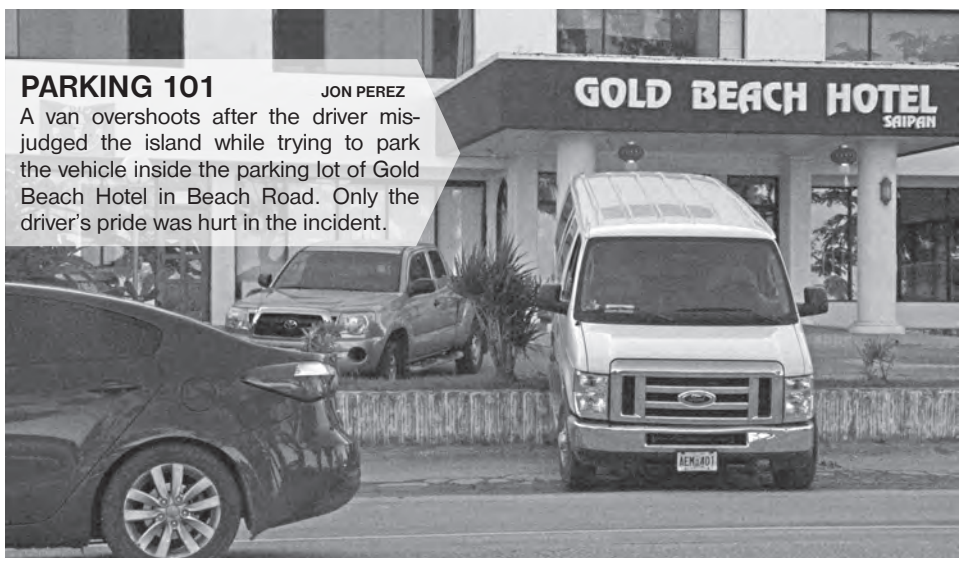
However, NMHC said they might prioritize applicants who are under their waiting list. Only Tinian currently doesn't have a wait list for loans.

"We have already a waiting list for our HOME program. I think we need to take care of them first," Palacios said, "That $1 million will be gone rather quickly."

Palacios said they wished they could give out more but they don't have enough funds.

"That's the only money we have. We wish to loan out more but we don't have," Palacios said.

The funds to be loaned out are a portion of the funds that NMHC provides as a guarantee to the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development. It came from collections from renting and selling their properties, and as the funding is not federal money, Palacios said they can go above the HUD income limits.



PARKING 101 JON PEREZ
A van overshoots after the driver misjudged the island while trying to park the vehicle inside the parking lot of Gold Beach Hotel in Beach Road. Only the driver's pride was hurt in the incident.

Concern over dead fish in Fiji and Vanuatu

SUVA, FIJI/PORT VILA, VANUATU—Recent reports have emerged of dead fish strewn along Fiji's Coral Coast and come on the heels of observations in Vanuatu of hundreds of dead fish and invertebrates floating near Pango Village on Efate, at Emten Lagoon in Port Vila and Aneityum Island.

Fish kills can occur as a result of a number of factors, ranging from a release of toxic chemicals to low concentrations of dissolved oxygen in the water.

For now, the Pacific Community (SPC) is reinforcing government warnings and urging people in affected areas to refrain from consuming the dead fish which may be harmful to human health.

While there is currently no local-level data from which to attribute a specific cause, satellite data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) indicate temperatures of the waters surrounding Fiji and Vanuatu have been hotter than average since late January 2016.

"This information is deeply concerning as warm water holds less dissolved oxygen than cooler water and once the level of dissolved oxygen drops below a critical threshold, fish and invertebrates can effectively suffocate," the director of SPC's Fisheries and Marine Aquaculture Division, Moses Amos, explained.

"This is especially an issue in shallow water habitats which can rapidly heat up and lose dissolved oxygen, and at nighttime, algae respire, removing oxygen from the surrounding water," Mr Amos said.

Fisheries scientists from SPC are in Fiji this week to work with the Ministry of Fisheries and Forests on developing a National Fisheries Policy and will also lend assistance with investigating the cause of the recent fish kill along the Coral Coast.

Fish kills, such as those being observed in Fiji and Vanuatu, are not a new phenomenon. In 2011, a large fish kill occurred in the Marovo Lagoon, in the Western Province of Solomon Islands, with low dissolved oxygen resulting from a die-off of a harmful algae bloom the likely cause.

Events like these underscore not only the importance of inshore fisheries resources in human affairs, but also the fragility of the reef habitats that support these resources, Mr Amos said.

In addition to the fish kills, a number of coral bleaching events have been reported in the region in the past few weeks, including on the Coral Coast of Fiji.

Coral bleaching occurs when high water temperatures cause a symbiotic relationship breakdown between the coral polyp and a tiny algae that dwells inside it (called zooxanthellae). Under normal conditions, this relationship is mutually beneficial; the algae provides food for the coral through photosynthesis while the coral provides shelter for the algae. When bleaching occurs, corals may be unable to obtain enough food, and can effectively starve to death.

Widespread coral bleaching was observed on Northern Hemisphere coral reefs over the 2015 summer, triggered by the strong El Niño conditions currently in effect. This prompted NOAA to declare the 'third global coral bleaching event', following the two previous mass beaching events in 1998 and 2002 that devastated many coral reefs around the world.

In 2015, NOAA predicted widespread bleaching in the Pacific Islands region over the 2015–2016 summer as El Niño conditions continue to intensify.

SPC's analysis of the future impacts of climate change on fisheries show that reef environments will become even more fragile over the next 100 years, due both to human-induced climate change and to environmental degradation from human population pressure in coastal locations.

SPC has developed a New Song for coastal fisheries that calls for renewed emphasis upon effective management of coastal fisheries, to help maintain them in the face of increased fragility along the Pacific's reef environments. ***(SPC)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB16-OVR-059

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: MARCH 21, 2016 **TIME: 10:00 A.M**

"GROUND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR OVR BUILDINGS N-2 & N-4 FOR THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERET OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ARLENE KAY A. YAMAGATA, M.S. CRC
DIRECTOR OF OVR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB16-OVR-060

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: MARCH 21, 2016 **TIME: 10:30 A.M.**

"PURCHASE OF QUICKIE S-636 POWER WHEELCHAIR, A PROJECT UNDER THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTERET OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ARLENE KAY A. YAMAGATA, M.S. CRC
DIRECTOR OF OVR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
For Food and Beverage Concession

The Northern Marianas Sports Association (hereinafter, "NMSA") is responsible for the operation, management and administration of the Susupe Sports Complex. To assure that participants and spectators are accorded adequate food and beverage services at the Complex, NMSA hereby requests proposals from currently licensed companies, experienced and capable of providing such services and wishing to be considered for a Contract to operate a food and beverage concession. The Contract term will be from June 1, 2016 to May 31, 2017.

NMSA will evaluate proposals and award a Contract for the concession service.

The RFP Package will be available until February 29, 2016 during business hours at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan.

A Pre-Proposal Conference will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 5, 2016, at 11:30 a.m., at the Conference room at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Proposals are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, 2016 at the Law Offices of Michael A. White, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan.

Proposers are required to pay a $50.00 non-refundable fee for each copy of the RFP.

NMSA assumes no obligation of any kind for expenses incurred by a respondent to this Notice.

All inquiries must be in writing, and sent to Michael A. White at fax no. 234-9537 or emailed to mwhite@saipan.com.

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF GUAM,
Plaintiff,
vs.
RYON OK CHANG,
Defendant.

Small Claims No. 15-0235
AMENDED SUMMONS

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT: RYON OK CHANG

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED AND NOTIFIED to file any answer you wish to make to the **COMPLAINT.** You have **Twenty (20) days** after service of this **AMENDED SUMMONS** upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to **Robert Tenorio Torres, Attorney at Law, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950,** or as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Court of the above-entitled Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Office of the Clerk of Court, CNMI Superior Court, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Ilmwal Aweewe, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan, MP 96950-0307. It may be prepared and signed for you by your attorney and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger of by mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

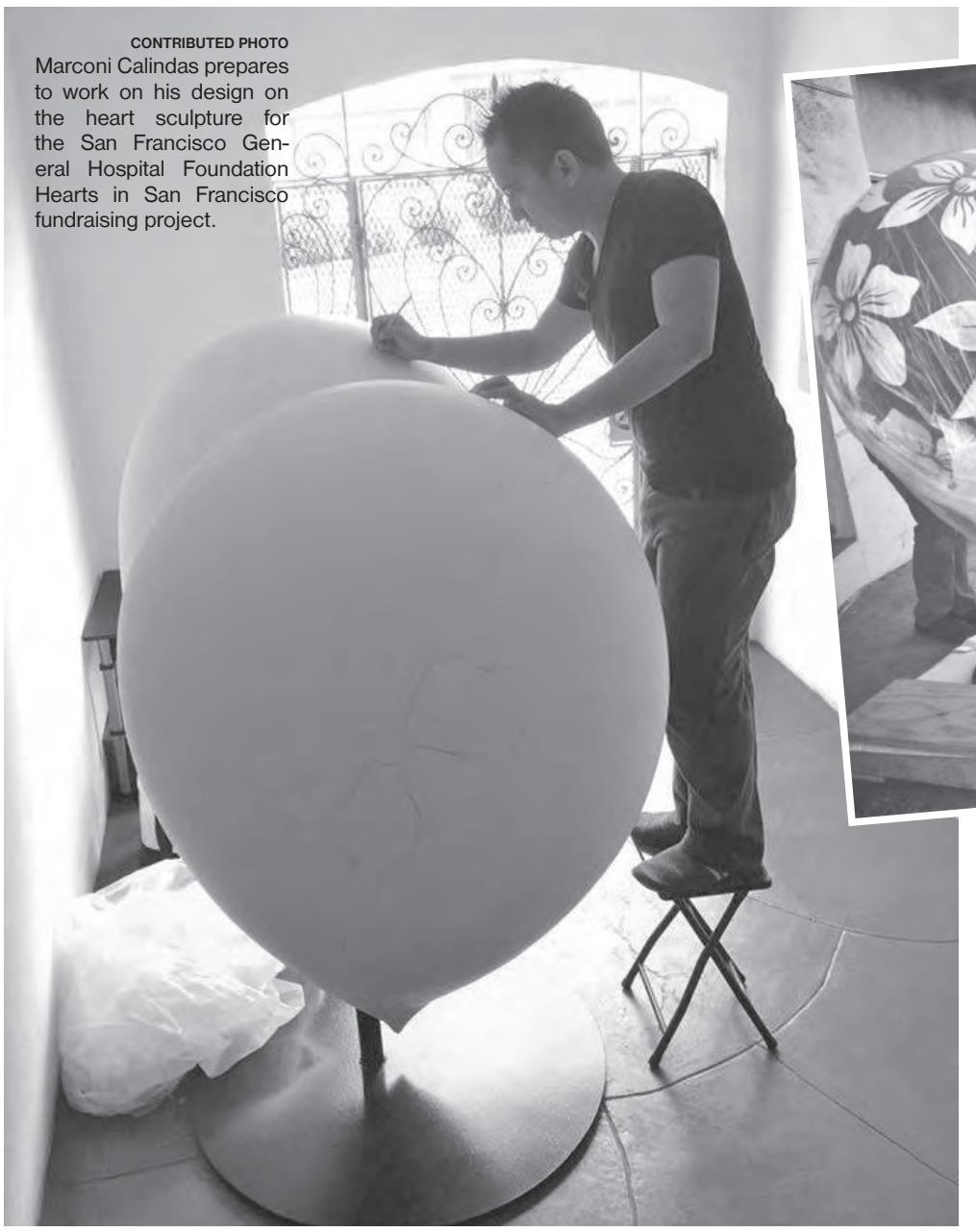
If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this **AMENDED SUMMONS**, judgment by default pursuant to the court rules of the above-entitled Court may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

SO ORDERED on this 29th day of January, 2016.

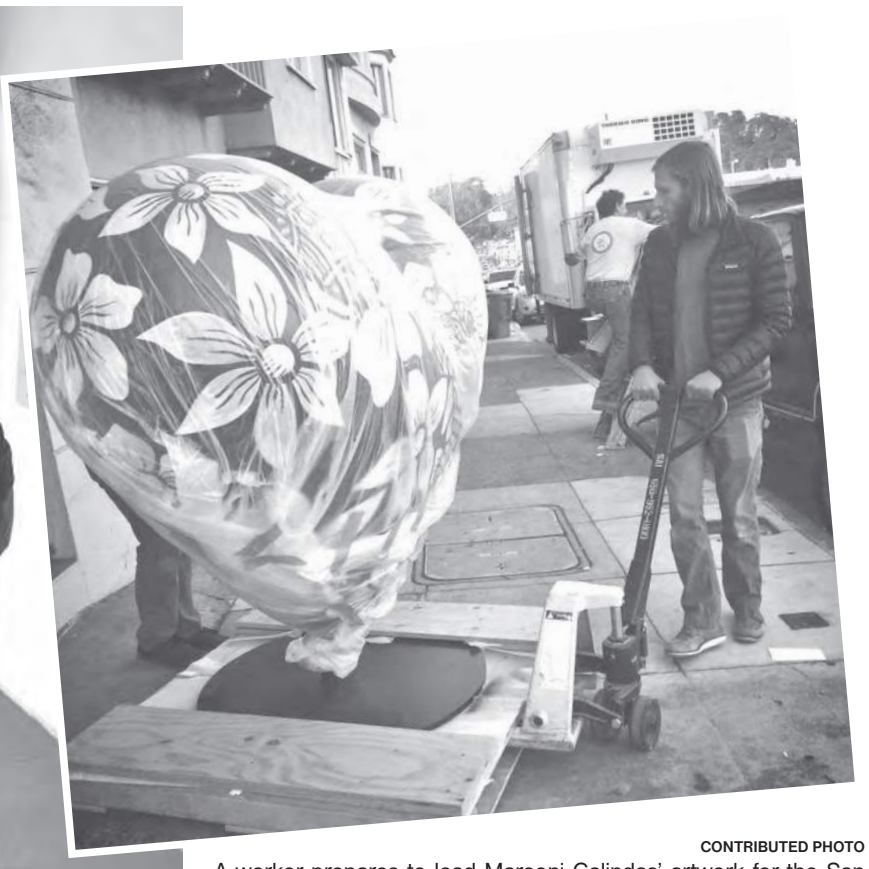
/s/ Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk

Former Saipan artist's 'heart' fetches $50K before auction

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Marconi Calindas prepares to work on his design on the heart sculpture for the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation Hearts in San Francisco fundraising project.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A worker prepares to load Marconi Calindas' artwork for the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation Hearts in San Francisco fundraising project.

Former Saipan resident and visual artist Marconi Calindas' contribution to the Hearts in San Francisco Project by the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation fetched $50,000 even before the start of the live auction of the annual fundraiser.

Calindas previously worked as a reporter with the *Saipan Tribune* for more than two years before deciding to concentrate in being a visual artist. He is now based in San Francisco where he made a name with the use of sunflowers on his artworks.

The Hearts in San Francisco is a public art project that aims to raise money to fund the programs of the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center. The project started in 2004 where Bay Area artists transform large and plain heart sculptures to works of art.

Calindas' large heart sculpture's artwork was sold to one of the corporate sponsors of this year's Heroes & Hearts and Hearts After Dark. All heart sculptures will be on displayed on the fundraising event for SFGHF on Thursday, Feb. 18, at AT&T Park.

Calindas said he has no idea which corporate sponsor bought his artwork but was glad to be part of the project and his design selected to be part of the 19 hearts that will be auctioned. He was elated to learn that his "heartwork" was bought even before bidding started.

He said he always dreamt of being part of the project the first time he saw the huge heart sculptures around the city. "I told myself back then that someday my art would be in one of those hearts as well. Every year they ask local artists to submit designs and they get a lot of submissions from thousands of artists that thrive in the city."

"I was so happy to have been selected and it is indeed an honor to represent also the Filipino artists who try to make it in this city, if not in the whole country. I just submitted my designs and luckily got selected."

The Philippine-born Calindas said he wanted to show the free spirit of San Francisco's diverse community on his artwork. "My particular theme for the Hearts in San Francisco depicts a playful flower. I wanted to show the free spirit of its people and how this city is indeed magical."

A committee composed of SFGHF staff and board members, and community volunteers select the artworks that will be part of the Hearts of San Francisco project. The hearts, since 2004, has already raised more than $10 million that funded SFGHF's Hearts Grants Program.

His artworks have been publicly displayed in the San Francisco City Hall, Children's Creative Museum, SoMARTS Gallery SF, Hotel Triton Mezzanine Gallery, Magnet SF, and Menlo College.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors also recognized Calindas for advocating equality and understanding that is shown with his artworks.

His biggest accomplishment so far was his design being one of the four that was featured for the Emirates Skywards frequent flyer card for 2016. His design, featuring the Burj Dubai, was used for the Platinum card.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

KHS progress report & Kagman Schools PTSA on Feb. 18

Kagman High School will be open to all stakeholders for mid-progress report on Feb. 18 from 3:30pm to 5:30 PM in the Cafeteria.

Kagman Schools PTSA will be hosted in the KHS Cafeteria from 5:30pm to 6:30pm.

All Kagman Schools' stakeholders are invited to attend both events. ***(PR)***

High surf, small craft advisory cancelled

The CNMI Emergency Operations Center has cancelled the high surf and small craft advisory issued earlier this week.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, however, is still advising the general public and inexperienced mariners to still exercise caution as the seas will remain just below hazardous levels for a few days.

The public is advised to continue to exercise caution along North and East facing reefs, as a moderate risk of rip currents will continue through most of next week.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam gentle to moderate winds are expected across the Marianas coastal waters the next couple days. Fresh to strong winds are again possible at the end of the week. Combined seas of 6 to 9 feet could build to between 8 and 10 feet by the weekend. ***(PR)***

Bordallo mourns Dungca's passing

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo today issued the following statement on the passing of Dr. Bernadita Camacho Dunga.

"I join the people of Guam in mourning the passing of Dr. Bernadita Camacho Dungca. Dr. Dungca dedicated her life to the preservation of the Chamorro culture and language as the author of the Inifresi and the role she played in publishing the first Chamorro dictionary. As a life-long educator and professor at the University of Guam, she worked tirelessly to pass down her knowledge to future generations. I thank her for her years of service to our community and I extend my sincere condolences to the Dungca family on their loss. My thoughts and prayers are with her family during this difficult time. She will be deeply missed." ***(PR)***

UOG publishes Pacific Asia Inquiry Volume 6

The University of Guam College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences has released Volume 6 of its peer-reviewed online journal, Pacific Asia Inquiry: Multidisciplinary Perspectives. The latest volume is available on the UOG website at www.uog.edu/pai.

Edited by Dr. Isa Kelley Bowman, the theme of this volume is women, gender, children, and the family in Asia and the Pacific.

Pacific Asia Inquiry is a peer-reviewed online journal dedicated to showcasing works on the Pacific Asia Region and to advancing knowledge and understanding of this region. The Pacific Asia has long been the focus of intense cultural, political and economic interaction with other world regions, and it is the central theme of this journal.

For more information and to view other volumes of Pacific Asia Inquiry, visit www.uog.edu/pai. ***(PR)***

UOG's James Sellmann published in Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies

Sellman

Dr. James Sellmann, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Guam, has published a research article entitled, "A Way of Learning: Bridging Ancient Chinese Philosophy of Education with Contemporary Learning Assessment and Learning Organizations," in the December 2015 issue of the Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies.

Sellmann's research explores the effectiveness of the high-stakes atmosphere of education in the imperial dynastic systems of China and East Asia and how it often led to successful learning outcomes. Sellmann argues that China had its own form of "liberal education," and contemporary American liberal education could benefit from analyzing and incorporating similar forms of learning and education.

For more information, contact Sellmann at jsellmann@triton.uog.edu.

Read Sellman's article on the UOG website at www.uog.edu/class. ***(PR)h***

Marpi closed for ordnance detonation tomorrow

The Department of Public Safety is notifying the public of an upcoming scheduled ordinance detonation scheduled for tomorrow, Feb. 18, at 1pm in Marpi.

DPS is advising all residents, workers, visitors, tour companies and tour guides that Marpi will be closed on Febr. 18, 2016 at 11am, until the completion of the detonation. Please make proper adjustments to your daily schedule on this date.

Should you have any questions pertaining to this operation, please call Captain Pedro Leon Guerrero, Explosive Response OIC, at 285-7013 or Sgt. Anthony Macaranas, XRT Operational Supervisor, at 483-5818. ***(PR)***

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

Man'amko and Best Sunshine dance together at Sweetheart Ball

The Office on Aging's Man'amko Center celebrated Valentine's Day with its first ever prom-themed Sweetheart Ball.

Complete with the bells and whistles of any glitzy prom, a gala livened up with entertainment, food and dance, and even their own photobooth, the exciting event was hosted by Best Sunshine International, Ltd. at the Taga Ballroom of Saipan World Resort Friday evening. The staging of the event was in honor of our elderly as they dressed up and danced the night away to live music and entertainment performed especially for them by the Saipan Sunset Islanders and the Corporatez.

The event drew around 135 attendees, including special guests of the senior citizens.

One of the regulars at the Man'amko Center, and crowned Prom Queen at the highlight of the event, Eden Liwag, says, "It's the best prom ever. We have seen how the company takes care of us. Best Sunshine has went out of their way to really entertain us and to give us more life just by being so kind and generous."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Best Sunshine Corporate Social Responsibility Project manager Mike Manglona and Linda Concepcion Torres from the Office on Aging pose for during Man'amko Prom.

Best Sunshine's CSR department serenade the man'amko.

Carmelito Asuncion and Eden Liwag gladly accept their prize after being named Manamko Prom King and Queen.

Posing with the newly crowned king and queen are Rep. Felicidad Ogumoro and CSR director Rita Chong.

Best Sunshine Corporate Social Responsibility director Rita Chong, who spearheaded the concept of the Sweetheart Ball, comments, "Here in the Marianas, we value our *man'amko*. This is their night. CSR is very honored to have been a part of this beautiful event. With humble gratitude, we give thanks to Mr. Walter Manglona and his great team, most especially the *man'amko* themselves, for allowing the CSR team to help put this event together."

Mike Manglona, CSR project manager, explains that the event is a continuance of giving value and unparalleled service to our elders after the welcome back banquet that BSI held at the Man'amko Center to welcome them back to the center after the typhoon. He says, "By throwing them a prom, it is a way of uplifting their spirits and is a contribution we are honored to do for our senior citizens. We hope to bring them joy little by little."

"Some of them did not get a chance to go to a prom and we wanted to give them this chance to have a fun time," said Chandis Cooper, CSR coordinator, who also performed and sang for the man'amko as part of their entertainment for the night. "Here at CSR, we always ask two questions before we pursue a project: Does it instill pride? And is there a need for it? The *man'amko* are a big part of our culture and we want to help give back to them, especially after Soudelor. With the *man'amko* being our pride, it also instills and extends pride in ourselves," adds Cooper.

Minerva Managhoy, a multiple-award winner at the Sweetheart Ball, said, "I only have gratitude for everything that Best Sunshine is doing, not only for the *man'amko*, but for the whole CNMI. We've always wanted something like this in a wonderful hotel setting but never thought it was going to be given for free, including the service and smiles they put into it. This is really a big blessing for all of us."

Aging Office director Walter Manglona extends his appreciation to Best Sunshine and the CSR team and all who had a hand in making the first-ever Sweetheart Ball a success.

"I would like to thank BSI for their extremely generous contribution to our elders and for making their Valentine's Day meaningful and exciting. I am very appreciative and humbled by their kindness," he said. (***PR***)

A live band played familiar local tunes prompting the man'amkos to hit the dance floor to celebrate the evening.

A few Best Sunshine CSR team members assisted and ushered the elders.

The Manamko Prom theme was P.S. I love you and the Taga Hall was all decked out that kicked off the Valentine's Day weekend.

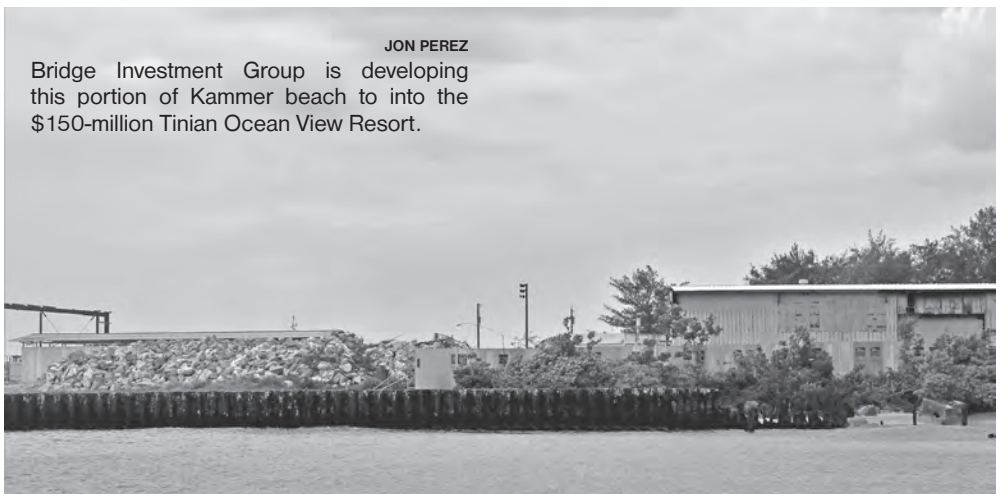
It was truly an evening to remember.

Best Sunshine CSR team assisted and served the food.

A photo booth was also provided by Best Sunshine to capture and remember each moment.

On behalf of the Man'amkos and the Office on Aging, Best Sunshine was presented with a certificate of appreciation for its continued support to the center.

Tinian aims to address transportation issues



JON PEREZ
Bridge Investment Group is developing this portion of Kammer beach to into the $150-million Tinian Ocean View Resort.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

TINIAN—Tinian Mayor Joey P. San Nicolas said that they are already thinking of ways to address the issue on transportation, especially when two more resort hotels open in the future.

Alter City Group is building its Plumeria Resort in Puntan Diablo cove. Bridge Investment, another investor, is developing 1,800 square meters of Kammer Beach into the $150-million Tinian Ocean View Resort.

"We're looking forward for these investors and the opportunities they would bring to the island of Tinian. We're also discussing ways on how to address the issue of transportation. There would be a lot of activity here especially when construction starts," said San Nicolas, during a brief break in festivities of the Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival last Sunday.

San Nicolas said investors also plan on how to get their clients from Saipan to Tinian, especially if there are big events like the Pika Festival.

"We're trying to get more charter flights. At the same time Star Marianas offers reduced rates on their flights, we are really thankful for that. Reduced airfare costs would attract more tourists to go to Tinian," he added.

"Investors have also plans to have a ferry or other modes of transportation from Saipan to Tinian. And we're looking forward to that."

He is also calling on rental car businesses to also look into increasing the number of their vehicles once tourist flow increases in the coming years. Cars over the weekend were all rented out due to the Pika Festival and the arrival of the U.S. military for the planned Tinian Divert Airfield.

"It has been a busy weekend with the military also here. I learned that all cars are rented and we have to also look into that in the coming years," San Nicolas said.

"One way to avoid the shortage of means of transportation is for car rental companies to start planning in increasing their fleet of vehicles. It's time for them to study to increase the number of cars. It will help us in the future," San Nicolas ended.

The next big event on Tinian is the San Jose Fiesta in the first week of May.

2nd writer's workshop this Saturday

If you missed the previous writer's workshop conducted by Walt Goodridge in January, here's your second chance to get started writing and publishing your book! And, as participants learned last month, it's easier than you think!

During this lively, interactive three-hour workshop, Goodridge will review the previous workshop's topics, plus:

- Mastering the creative process from start to finish
- How to tell a good story
- Creating a winning cover
- Marketing your book once complete
- How to go from idea to income in two hours!
- plus customized ideas for your unique project (Bring your manuscripts or previously published books)

The next writer's workshop would be held this Saturday, Feb. 20, 2016, from 9am to 12noon at the Joeten Kiyu Public Library Pacific Room. Admission is $10 in advance only. Goodridge saud 20 percent of door proceeds are donated directly to the library on the day of the event!

Seating is limited and no will be payments accepted at door. Prepay at JKPL by Feb. 18 or online at www.saipanliving.com/workshop, or using Paypal: "Send" $10 to workshop@saipanliving.com. Students pay $5 in advance or at the door; bring ID. RSVP and email questions to walt@saipanliving.com

Goodridge is the author of over 20 books in each of these genres. His books have been used as texts for university courses, as guides by other coaches, and his ideas have been quoted in books by "Guerrilla Marketing" guru Jay Conrad Levinson, music industry pioneer Chuck D, and other business authors worldwide.

Goodridge has written several books about Saipan including *Jamaican on Saipan*, *Chicken Feathers & Garlic Skin*: *Diary of a Chinese Garment Factory Girl on Saipan*, *Saipan Living*, *Doing Business on Saipan*, *Saipan Now: a photo adventure*, and *From Bugle Boy to Battle Ship: a Battle of Saipan Veteran's Memoir*. He has also coached, edited, or "ghost-written" other books including *When the Walls Came Down* by Ken Greene (a 9/11 Memoir), *Rucksack to Briefcase* by Chief Raymond (a military to civilian-side transition guide), *The Boy Who Dreamed to Be With His Parents on Saipan* and *GermStopper Boy* by local CHCC nurse, Riza Ramos and guided them from idea to Amazon sales! (see them all at www.waltgoodridge.com/books)

Known as the "Passion Prophet," Goodridge holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Columbia University and is a former civil engineer who walked away from his job to follow his passion for music, writing, and sharing information. He has been recognized by the CNMI Senate for his contributions to CNMI society. For more information, visit www.passionprofit.com or www.waltgoodridge.com. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. **16-006**

Opening Date: **Wednesday, February 17, 2016**
Closing Date: **Tuesday, March 01, 2016**

Engineering Technician

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Chief Engineer or his/her designee. Provides technical support and assistance related to project management, safety, quality control and assurance; performs field investigations and construction inspections; performs field or easement verifications; monitors equipment and materials used; ensures adherence with plans, specifications and contractual compliance; and submits deficiencies for review and correction. Gathers data through observation and by reviewing relevant resources such as construction plans, blue prints, specifications, maps, technical drawings, property records, and/or GPS data. Enters, updates and verifies data in systems; prepares and maintains reports, notices, drawings, graphs, charts, correspondence, cost estimates and related engineering documents in accordance with standards. Plans and prioritizes schedule and routes for field inspections; researches existing project sites and explores potential construction sites; monitors rights of way and easements. Monitors and reviews equipment and supplies inventory; provides notification of resource or maintenance needs. Prepares finished drawings from sketches, notes, existing drawings for design, reports, and construction plans using AutoCAD, GIS, and related applications. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned. One position is primarily intended to focus on AUTOCAD & drafting. The second position is primarily intended to focus on construction inspection. Provides support and assistance with special engineering studies.

LOCATION(S): Water & Wastewater Engineering Division, **Saipan,** Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $20,826.00 per annum - $28,115.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): Two (2)

Minimum Requirements: High School Diploma, GED, or ABE Program AS and 2 years of journey level experience in drafting, office and field engineering, or construction and inspection. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Basic engineering and construction terminology, methods, practices, and techniques; Construction, sequencing and procedures for Water & Wastewater facilities; Mathematical concepts; Experience in Advanced AutoCAD Drafting for utility infrastructure. Applicable equipment, controls and systems of assigned area of responsibility; Modern office technology. AutoCAD programs; mathematics; basic surveying and engineering concepts. Skill in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Reading and interpreting plans, specifications, field notes, maps and related technical documentation; Performing engineering surveys, mapping and locating; Performing inspections and identifying issues in assigned area of responsibility; Performing mathematical calculations and estimating resources and costs; drafting plans from sketches Researching, troubleshooting and problem solving; Preparing technical reports, maps and related documents used in assigned area of responsibility; Applying safe work practices; Planning and prioritizing activities and routes; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Applicants may be tested AND are subject to pre-employment drug testing.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer
P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950-1220 U.S.A.
Tel. Nos. (670) 235-7025 to 32 Fax (670) 235-5131

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. **16-007**

Opening Date: **Wednesday, February 17, 2016**
Closing Date: **Tuesday, March 01, 2016**

Junior Engineer

Duties: Work under the direct supervision of the Chief Engineer or his/her designee. Designs sanitation facilities and oversees the completion of assigned tasks. Executes and coordinates portions of assigned projects and tasks; adhere to applicable specifications and standards. Manage assigned aspects of water and sewer facilities projects. Perform construction inspection. Support operations with technical assistance; collect, maintain, and organize operational data for engineering analysis. Maintain project files; prepare related correspondence. Prepare design calculations, engineering drawings, and sketches. Draft parts of a variety of engineering reports and correspondence. Assist with data collection, troubleshooting and equipment analysis; evaluate water and sewer system needs and perform engineering analysis. Perform research for design, efficiency improvement, and operations support. Perform other duties of a similar nature or level.

LOCATION(S): Water & Wastewater Divisions, **Saipan**, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $37,756.00- $40,000.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): Two (2).

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil or Environmental Engineering. Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering is also acceptable if candidate has one year of experience engineering water and/or wastewater systems. Knowledge of: Engineering principles and practices; mathematical, pumping and hydraulics, and wastewater conveyance and treatment concepts. Knowledge of and ability to use AutoCAD is a plus. Knowledge of and skill with GIS is preferred but not required. Skill in: organizing, collecting information and evaluating data; preparing and presenting technical information for reports and/or documentation;; estimating construction costs; conducting studies. Able to: read and understand construction drawings; able to read and interpret specifications; use computers and related software applications; communicate, interact with co-workers, supervisor, and contractors to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Applicants may be tested AND are subject to pre-employment drug testing.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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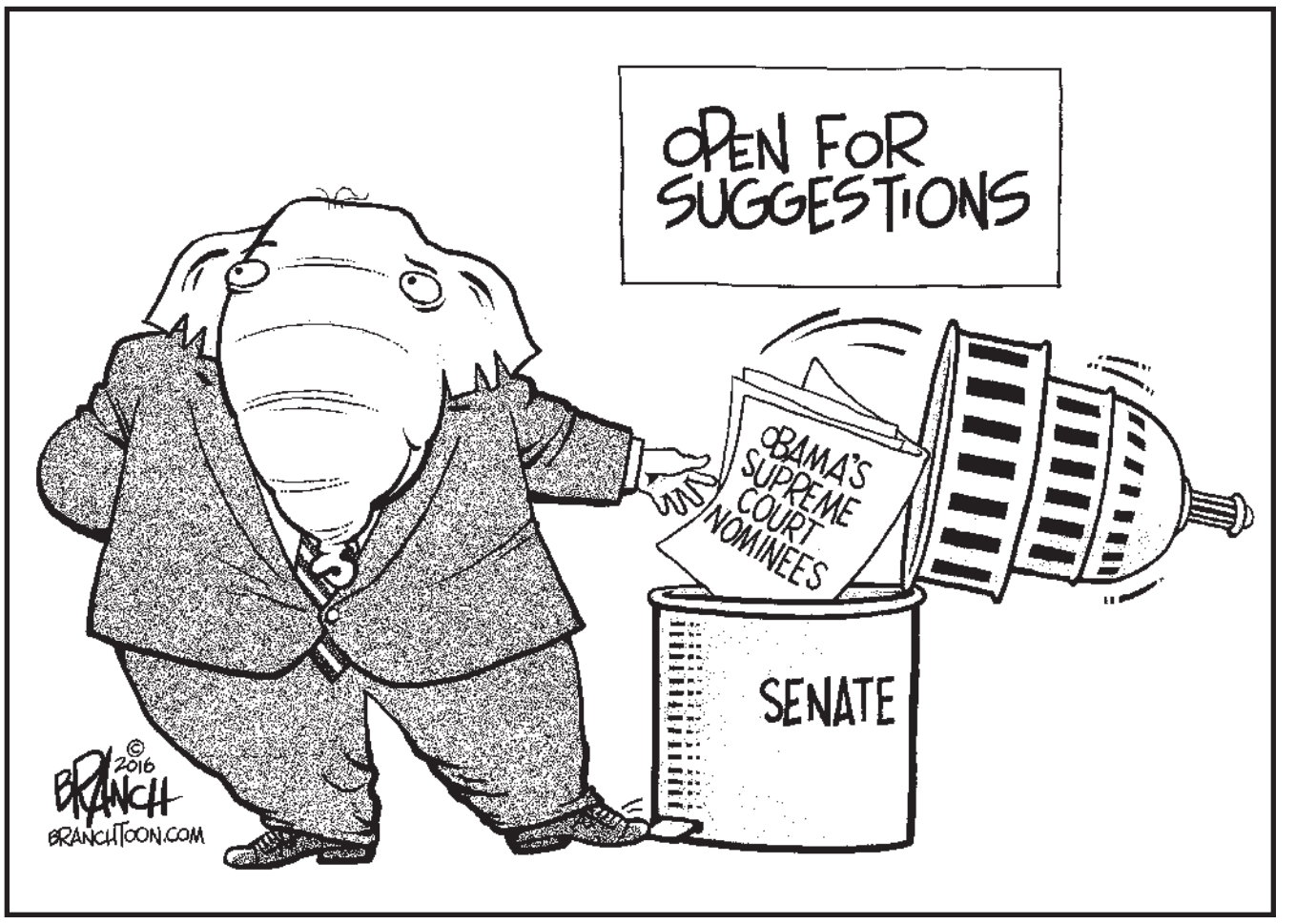

EDITORIAL

Scalia 'one of the towering legal figures of our time'

A familiar dictum advises that "politics end at the water's edge." We believe a similar protocol should apply when death claims a member of the Supreme Court while he or she yet wears the "robes of justice."

Politics should be suspended at death's door. At least until the late justice is properly laid to rest. Alas, such respectfulness—such decency—has not been accorded Justice Antonin Scalia, who was found dead Saturday of apparent natural causes during a visit to Texas.

No sooner was news of the 79-year-old jurist's passing first reported before the first salvos were fired in what almost certainly will be mother of all election-year battles for his now-vacant seat on high court.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reed, the Nevada Democrat, demanded that the late Scalia's seat be filled "right away." Conversely, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, the Kentucky Republican, declared that Scalia's seat on the nation's highest court should remain unfilled until the next president submits a nominee to the upper chamber for its advice and consent.

Out of deference to Scalia, we will restrain ourselves this day from joining the speculation among the chattering class about how the post-Scalia "Game of Robes" will play out. There will be plenty of opportunity in the days and months ahead.

For now, our preference is to remember the legacy Justice Scalia leaves. As President Barack Obama graciously eulogized Saturday afternoon, the late justice "dedicated his life to the cornerstone of our democracy: the rule of law." He truly was, in the president's words, "one of the towering legal figures of our time."

Indeed, during his three decades on the Supreme Court, the conservative jurist's powerful legal arguments transformed America jurisprudence, shaping debate not only on the high court, but also among lower courts and law schools throughout the land.

Considered somewhat acerbic when he first took his seat on the court, Justice Scalia reportedly became more collegial with fellow justices in the years that followed what was arguably his most significant majority opinion, which affirmed the Second Amendment right of individuals to keep and bear arms.

In the ensuring years, the conservative icon began to write a majority of the high court's biggest cases, using his formidable powers of legal persuasion to bring less-conservative justices around to his view.

America owes a debt to Antonin Scalia for his extraordinary service to this country. He will be missed.

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Antonin Scalia

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.

The picture perfect conservative of the Supreme Court bench died naturally in his sleep either the night of Feb. 12 or the early morning of the 13th at a resort function near his West Texas ranch in Marfa in the high desert of the Trans-Pecos located between the Davis Mountains and Big Bend National Park. He went hunting for quail, the bird with the famous camouflage plumage.

A jolly Italian who might have enjoyed his pasta and ravioli by the healthy size of his girth defined the Supreme Court of its conservative opinions, writing majority opinions and using scathing language to ridicule liberal positions when writing a minority view. The latest Supreme Courts stay on implementing Obama's Executive Order not to issue license of coal-mining operations was 5-4, reflecting the ideological make-up of the Court. Ruth Ginsberg of the liberal wing, however, remained one of his close associates who he dined with every New Year, so he was personally a very likable fellow.

His record in the Supreme Court may give liberal lawyers a headache but Scalia was known for "textualism in statutory interpretation and originalism in constitutional interpretation," fancy words for sticking to precedence before anything else. He once said that he preferred a "dead" Constitution than "a living one", to counter Liberals push to have the Judiciary interpret the Constitution, which he thought was the Executive and Legislative branches prerogatives.

Even former Texas AG Ted Cruz, a GOP presidentiable, got into the act by suggesting that Scalia's replacement should be made by the next President rather than Obama. (A measure of GOP desperation.) Dude, the President has ten months to go on his term!

Of all the Justices, Scalia asked the most direct questions to all those who went before the Court; talked a streak, inviting more laughter from his audience than anyone else. He essentially talked to convince his fellow Justices to adopt his position, he said.

Antonin was an only child of Italian parents. He took the other end of the productivity spectrum and counted nine children with Maureen McCarthy he met at Radcliffe where she also got a Master's degree. It is the Ha'vard Scalia I came to know, turned seriously Catholic, a pre-Vatican II type, but definitely Catholic schooled (Georgetown U) and Jesuit-trained to be sharp-witted, a clear thinker and a wordsmith of high caliber.

A Reagan appointee, when he reached the SC bench, Justice John G. Roberts said that the Court was never same ever again. Being Italian made him the first in the history of the nation. Not too many appreciates that. With Italians derided in the U.S. as Dago, a pejorative term common in the streets of New York City, Scalia wore his ethnicity with pride without wearing it up his sleeves. TY for that!

His conservatism followed every "deviation" he saw not explicitly prescribed in the US Constitution like the death penalty, same-sex marriage issue, school prayers, abortion, etc. After the Earl Warren Court who surprised many, the Supreme Court went progressive, staying ahead of the White House and the U.S. Congress, and Scalia was not one to have anything to do with that. His record bears his resolve not only to defer from being a judicial activist but to oppose those who did.

No offense to his wife Maureen, but Antonin could not get more conservative in America than marry one with the name McCarthy, similar to that of Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin who enflamed anti-Communist sentiments in the nation, now popularly known as "McCarthyism." Maureen pretty much stayed in the background of her husband, and we could not blame her since she had to raise nine children, five boys and four girls, one of the boys, Paul, being a priest.

Still, the United States views itself as a child of New England and European ethics. This state of affairs is still operative in U.S. education as teachers in all U.S. schools in 2010-11 was 81.9 percent Caucasian, 7.8 Hispanic, and 6.8 Black and the remainder are Asian (1.8), multi-racial (1), American Indian (.5), and Pacific Islander (.1). Education is the first line of learned acculturation, and the values and virtues of Europe naturally precede those from any place else, and are automatically taught by those that hold them.

Antonin Scalia's conservatism is not a mistake, nor will I suggest that his conservative ideology diminished his humanity. In fact, when I resided in Falls Church, Virginia, I disagreed with all the positions he had taken, but Scalia was not scary to warrant impeachment. The Supreme Court Justice was a jolly old fellow. I just did not bother with his opinions.

So this week, I light a candle for Antonin Scalia, his influence in the life of the United States, its Supreme Court, and the U.S. Congress, but most especially to the White House that is now saddled with looking for a replacement. I think, Obama can do that task, but if it becomes too controversial, we'll just wait for Hillary, won't we?

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Demagoguery

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune*.*

The scatter thought fireworks on the 25 percent pension pay for retirees was a perfect show of disorientation of lawmakers who were totally clueless of the issue.

There were inflated though wrongful views popping up everywhere. The only one that made sense was Rep. BJ Attao who pushed a measure recently to address and resolve the issue. In fact, he pointed out that the $15 million is short by at least $2 million.

None of the demagogues who castigated Settlement Fund Trustee Joyce Tang did anything to ensure that the measure introduced by Rep. Attao was given timely approval. The mouthy cabal engaged in delusional spouts where brawn came storming in over brain. Nah! You didn't fly off high and mighty but exacted confirmation of adolescency!

The expenditure of any penny in public funds requires an "appropriation." It's both constitutional and statutory, requirements demagogues overlooked in favor of false assertion in the news media to distract attention from their negligence.

There's a principle behind the ID of funds. Must make sure you don't use, i.e., federal funds to pay the Settlement Fund. It is constitutionally prohibited using operations funds for salaries. Mind you, the 25 percent for retirees is about salaries. Is this why you're so quick and brave sporting cluelessness?

Cite Authority: Like the reprogramming of $400,000 for the Luta ship: was the source of funds identified? Was the money appropriated? If not, isn't this a violation of constitutional and statutory laws? And do you have an explanation or have you decided to rule via fiat—dictatorship—over a government of laws? Could you cite legal authority supporting your disposition?

Did the wheels of reason fall off somewhere thus your asymmetrical salvos? Using the intellect—your ability to reason—would have resolved it but chose to mouth off without brain in gear. Had you reviewed pertinent laws you would have found that it "says what it says and doesn't say what it doesn't say". It says "appropriation!" Oh, include a little more to cover late charge payments retirees had to absorb as a result of your grand negligence, fair?

The hasty transfer of funds didn't make it legal in the absence of legal authority—identification of fund source and appropriation. Moreover, fund shortage mandates identification of funds. Beyond budgetary projections the excess funds are identified and given to the legislature for "supplemental" appropriations.

I wonder if the guys have defective or degenerative memories or serious reading deficiency or all of the above as to miss initial apprehension and comprehension?

Aloof in midst of insolvency

We keep out ears to the ground listening for some hopeful tidings of plans to improve the lot of families everywhere. But people at the helm seem aloof in their self-created comfort zone or vacuum.

Perhaps they're out searching for the magical dust to use as water sprinkler to dampen the creeping dire effects of a viciously depressed economy.

With depressed economic condition buried under piles of debts one would think that the NMI has the vision to plan beyond natural disaster that includes fiscal preparedness. This doesn't seem an urgent issue, a tale of the chief navigator oblivious to what's in store for the multitude under dire fiscal straits or crisis.

Aloof as though twenty years of economic dystopia—where nothing works—isn't enough. Isn't salary stagnancy the very culprit of familial miseries these days? Hasn't this mess started the final journey into home foreclosures or homelessness among families here? How could you have missed the impending cocktail of deluge in familial hardship?

Apparently, the prevailing aura shows how you conspicuously lack the urgency and interest to diligently review what measures to take to ease familial economic hardship throughout the archipelago. There's your treasured view of the implications of a vacuum you're not even sure of.

Meanwhile, Gov. Brown of California urges leadership to pare down the $72 billion unfunded liabilities of the pension program. He wants $2 billion pumped into the rainy fund. I was like "Come ride our canoe loaded with $789 million in unfunded liability". At least it would sink quicker too! In deep kimchee, are we not people?

The only extraordinary action senators have taken was the increase in their salaries of some $2,500 per month for expenses. What about the expenses of struggling families all over the NMI? Does it matter to you that you only took care of yourself while ignoring hardship in households you represent throughout the NMI?

When you're aloof and only pay attention to your deep pockets you start carving a divide between the "haves" and "have nots" in our community.

Your inaction confirms your aloofness cocooned in the air-condition confines of your office peeping to see if the sunset has spread over the horizon for happy hour. It's one more piece of wood added to the raging fire of discontentment!

Troubling fiscal crisis

While GovGuam scrambles to meet late allotment obligations for its educational estate, it has the agility to meet them given its thriving economy making millions of dollars annually.

Our revenue generation has devolved into far less than projected. It brings into focus whether the Settlement Fund and other significant obligations could be met. Simple: look south and declare a suspect affirmative answer! Get out of your comfortable cocoon or vacuum and face the music. Passing hopelessness to villagers is very cowardly!

When you skip into your comfort zone it is the less fortunate you've failed to help secure a steady future. And no matter how fast you run you still must live with us the next day. There's no place to hide, pal.

Wrote Joel R. Butuyan, columnist for the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, "Improving the lives of our less fortunate countrymen will not only lead to an improvement in their economic well-being but will also transform our political, social and cultural wellbeing as a nation."

Zika is serious, but can we stop stigmatizing microcephaly?

By KEREN LANDMAN
The Dallas Morning News

Keren Landman is a physician trained in internal medicine, pediatrics and infectious diseases. She wrote this essay as part of The Dallas Morning News' partnership with the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, where she is a fellow.

During my first week of medical school, we watched a video documenting the life and death of a child with severe spina bifida. Her parents had been aware of her prognosis long before birth but did not terminate the pregnancy; they cared for her until her death, when she was 8. Speaking years afterward, they regretted nothing. They saw her as a gift from God, to be valued and loved as much as their other children.

I distinctly remember sitting in the lecture hall and thinking, "You people are out of your minds." I'd grown up with a sibling who had severe autism. His disability had never felt like a gift. Instead, it ruined birthdays, strained family gatherings and doubled my parents' expectations of me. I'd learned to force a beatific smile when told how much patience I must have learned, but until that film, I'd never realized some people weren't faking their smiles: for some people, disability was a source of joy.

I've grown and changed since then, but the way we talk about disabilities in the news has not.

The catastrophic tone in recent microcephaly depictions is only the latest inaccurate and overwhelmingly negative representation of the disability experience. Microcephaly is a symptom of a variety of genetic, infectious, and toxic disorders, and is diagnosed when an infant's head circumference is below average. Of all babies with microcephaly, 15 percent go on to have typical intelligence, while the remainder may have a range of mental and physical disabilities, depending on the cause.

The news media has churned out stories like the recent CNN dispatch in which a Brazilian physician says, unchallenged, affected newborns "will require special attention their entire lives. It's an emotional stress that can't be imagined."

Disability activists say such florid coverage is bad for parents, people with disabilities and the rest of us, too.

Journalists communicating negatively slanted stories might see themselves as simply telling it like it is. A Washington Post video _ played by clicking a picture of a screaming baby _ shows a brow-furrowed physician, then displays the text, "(babies are) born with ... brain damage" while playing a vaguely nail-biting dirge. With so many grim-lipped doctors and anguished parents, it's only natural to assume the worst.

But journalists are responsible for transcending assumptions, says Kristin Gilger, Director of the National Center on Disability and Journalism, which maintains a disability style guide for reporters. In the case of microcephaly, that means exploring the spectrum of associated anomalies. The disease has been presented as inevitably debilitating to the extent that the United Nations has demanded affected countries reconsider abortion bans _ when in fact, almost 30 percent of children with microcephaly in one study were able to attend mainstream schools.

We also have a responsibility to use language that avoids implying people with disabilities are mistakes. If there's a unifying rule to write by, says Gilger, it's to use "people-first" language. In most cases, people with disabilities prefer to be called, well, people with disabilities _ not "disabled people." Being characterized by a disability can make it feel like that's all people notice.

Fear of offending vocal activist communities might scare off journalists from covering disability stories. However, it's critical that those stories be written. "The media tends to determine attitudes toward disability," says Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, English professor and Disability Studies Initiative co-director at Emory University. "And the language is so negative about ... the human variations we think about as disability."

Telling balanced stories that show a range of experiences and relationships for people with disabilities is a step toward changing public attitudes toward disability _ itself an important step toward increasing accessibility, employment opportunities and social and romantic prospects.

Perhaps most importantly, broader coverage of disability experiences could dramatically reduce anxiety among new parents of children with anomalies. The media's persistent depiction of microcephaly as a certain cause of severe debility must be hugely demoralizing to families of children whose futures are uncertain, and for whom parental morale can make a big difference.

And for expectant parents deciding whether to terminate pregnancies on the basis of fetal anomalies, a prognosis untarnished by stigma and irrational expectations increases the likelihood of making the best choice to suit their emotional and physical resources.

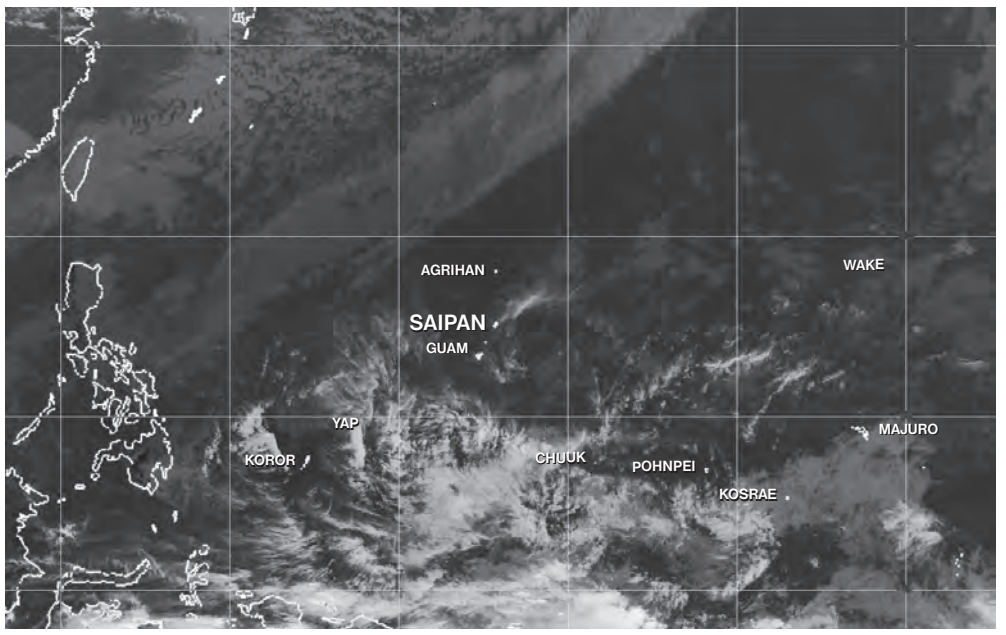
Katherine Schneider, a disability activist and retired psychologist who is blind, notes the potential for people with disabilities to contribute to the world. Still, she says, "I acknowledge people's right to choose. I just hope they choose on the basis of good, balanced information rather than fear."

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly sunny with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy wih isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼75°	▲86° ▼75°	▲86° ▼75°	▲86° ▼75°	▲86° ▼75°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:11 PM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2016

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N148E to beyond 130E at 15N. Extensive cloudiness and patchy showers are found northwest of the Marianas along and up to 300 miles northwest of this boundary. A shear line runs southwestward from 14N180 to west of Chuuk at 8N150E. Cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and up to 250 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough stretches eastward from 1N135E through a disturbance centered southwest of Chuuk near 2N147E to end at about EQ175E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms southeast of Yap are between 8N and the equator from 142E to 150E farther east. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring south of Chuuk and Pohnpei between 6N and the equator from 150E to 163E. Low-level convergence north of the near-equatorial trough is triggering extensive cloudiness and scattered showers over parts of Kosrae state and the Marshall Islands between 9N and 2N from 163E to 171E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼76
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼76
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼76
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼79
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼80
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼80

Around the Globe

Auckland	Rain	▲75	▼69
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲49	▼26
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲63	▼58
Honolulu	Windy	▲80	▼68
London	Showers	▲44	▼37
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲89	▼58
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼71
Melbourne	Showers	▲71	▼60
Miami	Thundershowers	▲81	▼63
New York	Rain	▲57	▼36
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲47	▼34
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲42	▼32
Pusan	Sunny	▲47	▼31
Rome	Showers	▲58	▼48
Salem	Cloudy	▲61	▼45
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲75	▼58
Seoul	Sunny	▲42	▼25
Tokyo	Windy	▲53	▼34
Washington, DC	Rain	▲52	▼33

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:14 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet
9:04 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
2:33 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
10:14 PM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:41 AM	6:21 PM
Thursday	6:41 AM	6:21 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	6:22 PM
Saturday	6:40 AM	6:22 PM
Sunday	6:39 AM	6:22 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:34 PM	1:47 AM
Thursday	2:28 PM	2:42 AM
Friday	3:22 PM	3:36 AM
Saturday	4:15 PM	4:26 AM
Sunday	5:07 PM	5:14 AM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 24, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:20am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

MU7162	5:10am	08:00am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/193	8:40am	11:10pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA2920/193	2:20pm	11:10pm	2 via GUM-ROR
UA2926/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

MU7161	10:00 pm	5:30am	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/2920	10:20pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Cancer patients snagged in health law's tangled paperwork

WASHINGTON (AP)—Walt Whitlow was under treatment for cancer when he got an unwelcome surprise.

His financial assistance under President Barack Obama's health care law got slashed. That meant his premium quadrupled and his deductible went from $900 to $4,600.

Hundreds of thousands of people lose subsidies under the health law, or even their policies, when they get tangled in a web of paperwork problems involving income, citizenship and taxes. Some are dealing with serious illnesses like cancer. Advocates fear the problems, if left unresolved, could undermine the nation's historic gains in health insurance.

Ana Granado was scheduled for reconstruction after breast cancer surgery when she was notified that her coverage would be canceled because of questions about her immigration status. Legal aid attorneys got that cleared up quickly, but Granado's financial assistance for her premiums was suspended.

Lynn Herrin got irritated when she had to pay $700 to the IRS after it determined she got too big a tax credit for premiums under the health law.

Since she was also having trouble finding a doctor who accepted her insurance, Herrin canceled. It was a costly mistake. She was diagnosed with oral and neck cancer and depleted her family savings to pay for treatment.

Not every case is as distressing, but coverage disruptions due to complex paperwork requirements seem commonplace in the health law's system of subsidized private insurance, which currently covers about 12.7 million people.

The government says about 470,000 people had coverage terminated through Sept. 30 last year because of unresolved documentation issues involving citizenship and immigration. During the same time, more than 1 million households had their financial assistance "adjusted" because of income discrepancies. Advocates say "adjusted" usually means the subsidies get eliminated.

"When people get that bill for a full-price plan, they panic and they cancel the insurance," said Elizabeth Colvin of Foundation Communities, an Austin nonprofit that serves low-income people. Some worry the problem could undermine the law's insurance markets, now in their third year.

"These problems can grow, and they can contribute to undermining consumer faith in the system, and that could lead to attrition," said Rachel Klein of Families USA, an advocacy group that supports the health law.

Pressured by a Republican-led Congress hostile to Obama's overhaul, the administration is highly sensitive to criticism that some people may be getting benefits they're not legally entitled to. But Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell recently acknowledged the paperwork tangle is more likely to trap the innocent than fraudsters. The administration has made customer retention a priority, and Burwell said she's focused on making the system less challenging for consumers eligible for benefits.

The next few months will tell whether improvements to the HealthCare.gov website in the 2016 sign-up season helped cut down on problems. The technology now alerts consumers to gaps in their applications that could later trigger documentation problems.

If there's a documentation issue, consumers have about three months to straighten things out. But Whitlow, a self-employed remodeling contractor from Volente, Texas, said he was blindsided.

Walt Whitlow poses for a photo at his home, Monday, Feb. 8, 2016, in Leander, Texas. Whitlow was undergoing cancer treatment when he learned his premiums for coverage under President Barack Obama's health care law quadrupled and his deductible went from $900 to $4,600. AP

Americans sending less lobster to Canada as processing grows

SACO, Maine (AP)—America's lobster industry is sending less of its catch to Canada as processing grows in New England, and the growth could have widespread ramifications for consumers who are demanding more lobster products every year.

U.S. lobstermen, clustered in the coastal New England states, have long sent a large amount of their catch to Canada's Maritime Provinces, where some two dozen companies process millions of pounds of lobster meat every year into everything from vacuum-sealed lobster meat packages to lobster pate. The processed lobster ends up in products like lobster ravioli and lobster pot pie that are growing in popularity with consumers.

But the dynamics of the processing industry are slowly changing. America exported about 69 million pounds of lobster to Canada in 2014, and the 2015 figure was less than 67 million, federal data show.

The trend comes as the lobster catch is booming, enabling the growth in processed lobster products. American fishermen set a record for lobster catch in 2012 and nearly topped it the following two years.

More processing plants in Maine are providing a way for fishermen to sell their lobsters locally rather than export, and Massachusetts lawmakers might change laws to allow more processing in their state. The processing growth could ultimately democratize the notoriously expensive lobster by making lobster products more available and affordable.

"Processors are creating more markets; more markets create greater opportunity for additional channels for lobster products to be sold," said Luke Holden, president of Luke's Lobster and owner of Cape Seafood, a processor in Saco, Maine.

Maine's lobster meat processing industry barely existed 25 years ago, slowly grew to five companies in 2010 and now includes 15 firms that processed about 20 million pounds of meat in 2013. Voters agreed to help pay for more growth through a 2014 referendum to dedicate $7 million in public money to Maine seafood and lobster processing.

In this June 20, 2014, file photo, lobsters are processed at the Sea Hag Seafood plant in Tenants Harbor, Maine. AP

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Comcast TV outage hits much of US, but problem mostly fixed

Customers of Comcast Corp. lost part of their cable television service for several hours in many major U.S. metropolitan areas Monday, but the company said the problem was fixed in most places by early afternoon. Company spokeswoman Jenni Moyer says engineers continue to work on what she characterized as a temporary network interruption. "Our engineers continue to work on this issue and almost all services have already been restored," she said. "We apologize for any inconvenience this has caused our customers."

US agency closes probe into Kia small cars without recall

DETROIT (AP)—U.S. auto safety regulators have closed an investigation into air bag problems in some Kia small cars without seeking a recall. In September, investigators began looking into problems in about 186,000 Spectra cars from 2007 through 2009. The agency and Kia received 163 complaints about failure of mats in the front passenger seats that detect whether a child is there. The devices turn off the air bags to prevent injuries. But the mats could develop electrical problems that let the air bags inflate even if a child is present.

Israeli leader defends gas extraction deal in Supreme Court

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made an unprecedented appearance at the Supreme Court Sunday to defend a deal signed in December with U.S. and Israeli developers drilling offshore gas deposits. Israel's Channel 10 TV reported Netanyahu as telling the court that if Israel were to alter its deal investors could turn away and buy gas from Israel's enemies instead. Netanyahu said he chose to speak in court because of the strategic importance of the gas deal, which he says will allow Israel to develop ties with Jordan, Egypt and Turkey and significantly boost its economy.

ECB chief: parts of Europe banking system 'face challenges'

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)—European Central Bank head Mario Draghi says some eurozone banks "face challenges" but that the system is more resilient due to oversight that was strengthened after the global financial crisis.

Draghi said Monday that thanks to new supervision at the European Union level, banks were in a position to bring down the amount of bad loans burdening their finances "in an orderly manner over the next few years."

His comments in the European Parliament follow a week of violent swings in the stock prices of major European banks including Deutsche Bank and Societe Generale. Draghi said some banks faced challenges from litigation and restructuring costs as well as working off soured investments.

"Clearly, some parts of the banking sector in the euro area still face a number of challenges," Draghi said at a meeting of the parliament's economic and monetary affairs committee in Brussels.

The ECB carried out a wide-ranging check of bank finances in 2014 that sought to identify loans that banks were holding that had little hope of being repaid. Draghi said the check had forced banks to take steps to strengthen their finances.

Europe moved more slowly than the United States to clean up bank finances after the financial crisis that deepened with the bankruptcy of U.S. investment bank Lehman Brothers in 2008 and led to a global recession. Banks are key to the wider economy because they supply the credit needed for companies to expand.

The recent sharp drops in stock prices reflected fears banks might be exposed to risks in commodity producing markets, companies and countries. Commodity prices have dropped amid fears about the health of the global economy.

Draghi said the situation was "amplified" by perceptions that banks may have difficulty adjusting to an economy with lower growth and lower interest rates. Low interest rates, in part the result of central bank policies, have squeezed bank earnings by narrowing the difference between the rate at which they borrow and the rate at which they lend.

Nation

Obama faces political puzzle in naming Scalia successor

WASHINGTON (AP)—For most presidents, choosing a Supreme Court nominee is a puzzle. For President Barack Obama, the chance to pick a successor to Justice Antonin Scalia is more like a Gordian Knot.

As the White House carries out a rare election-year search for a nominee, the president's lawyers and top advisers are sorting through a tangled web of political, legal and personal factors.

A smart pick and nomination strategy could determine whether Obama gets to reshape the highest court for the next generation. The wrong pick could cede that opportunity to his successor.

Democrats view this as a moment decades in the making. Recent Republican presidents have gotten more chances to fill seats, tilting the court in to the right.

"The Supreme Court has not reflected where the American people have been on issues," said Gregory Craig, who served as White House counsel early in Obama's first term. "This is the first opportunity in many, many years to bring the court more in line with the American people."

For Obama, the clock is ticking. The sooner he picks a name, the longer he has to try to force the Republican-led Senate to hold a vote.

At the heart of Obama's dilemma is how to manage the fierce Republican opposition to his decision to name a nominee. Within hours of Scalia's death on Saturday, Republicans began arguing Obama should let his successor fill the open seat.

Obama brushed that argument aside, but it is undoubtedly weighing on his decision. Given the election-year timing, Obama would likely have been inclined to name the nominee most likely to appeal to Republican senators.

But if Republicans object to Obama even trying to fill the post - and remain united in that position -the president may see little point in bending too far to appease the other party. He may feel the pull to focus more on ginning up his own party's base. Then key question becomes: What are the chances of getting a vote?

This wouldn't be "the first time Republicans have come out with a lot of bluster only to have reality sink in," White House spokesman Eric Schultz said Monday.

Refusing to allow a vote has consequences for the court, Shultz said, pointing to the prospects for tie votes that would allow lower court decisions to stand.

Schultz said the president will use the same criteria he used when he nominated Sonia Sotomayor, who became the first Hispanic on the court, and Elena Kagan, then-solicitor general.

In those instances, and in his appointments to lower courts, Obama has shown a desire to expand ethnic and racial diversity and to elevate more women.

His nominee would almost certainly support abortion rights, consideration of race in college admissions and other areas of public life, limits on campaign contributions and stronger rights of labor unions - all issues that have divided the court's liberal and conservative justices on a 5-4 margin.

Supreme Court justices and their political preferences

Following the death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, the highest court in the U.S. will have to get by with eight justices instead of nine until a successor is appointed. Because the justices decide how federal law should be interpreted, their political opinions on controversial topics have a major impact on the country.

ELENA KAGAN, along with Sonia Sotomayor, is seen as being on the left end of the court's political spectrum. The two justices, both nominated by President Barack Obama, generally agree on most issues. At 55, Kagan is the youngest justice.

SONIA SOTOMAYOR fights for under-represented parts of society and tries to defend unpopular plaintiffs. Like Kagan, she generally votes from a left political position.

ANTHONY KENNEDY was the ideological middle between the left and right blocks of the Supreme Court justices before Scalia's death.

JOHN ROBERTS, who heads the Supreme Court as chief justice, fits more into the right wing of the legal body than the left. Nominated by George W. Bush, the 61-year-old has taken conservative positions on abortion and guns, but has drifted slowly to the left in the last years.

RUTH BADER GINSBURG is also part of the left block and has spoken out in favor of gay rights and Obama's healt hcare reform. The 82-year-old is also an advocate of women's rights.

STEPHEN BREYER looks for compromises and is known as a moderate intermediary who tends towards the left. The judge, who was nominated by former president Bill Clinton, is known for his excellent writing style and his elaborate questions at oral hearings.

CLARENCE THOMAS is known to be quite conservative. He rarely speaks at oral hearings, but he is known for writing explosive texts.

SAMUEL ANTHONY ALITO is the main proponent of the religious right in the Surpeme Court. You can nearly always predict the position of this justice, who was nominated by George W Bush: He is against abortion, same-sex marriage, stricter gun control and stipulations for election donations.

Source: DPA
Graphic: Staff, Tribune News Service

Tornados, snow, sleet in East; record heat in West

CENTURY, Fla. (AP)—Suspected tornados touched down in Florida's Panhandle and Mississippi on Monday, destroying more than a dozen homes, damaging a school while it was in session and trapping an elderly woman and possibly other residents under rubble.

The tornadoes were part of a large winter storm system that was clobbering the eastern U.S. with snow, sleet, strong winds and rain, and which came on the heels of record-breaking low temperatures.

In the West, it was a very different story: Both Arizona and California were experiencing record-high temperatures in the high 80s and low 90s.

Officials in Florida and Mississippi were investigating reports of at least three possible tornadoes. One of the apparent twisters swept through the rural town of Century, in the northwest corner of Florida's Panhandle, late Monday afternoon, destroying or significantly damaging about 10 homes, said Escambia County spokeswoman Joy Tsubooka.

Donald Pugh was at home in Century when the funnel tore through his neighborhood of small wood-frame houses and mobile homes. Walking through a maze of uprooted trees, downed power lines and shattered glass in front of his home late Monday, Pugh told The Associated Press that just minutes after the storm he and other neighbors used a chain saw to free a 94-year-old woman from the debris of her nearby home.

"It took us quite awhile," he said. "She was trapped under a metal door that was twisted."

The woman talked to the men as they worked to free her.

"She was telling us where she was and that she was OK," Pugh said.

She appeared to have minor injuries, but was taken to a nearby hospital as a precautionary measure because of her age, Tsubooka said. The spokeswoman said fire crews were investigating "multiple calls" of people possibly trapped in the rubble, but she couldn't immediately say how many there were. She said several of the reports proved to be unfounded.

Escambia County Administrator Jack Brown said authorities didn't believe there were any people still trapped as of late Monday night, but he said crews were continuing search and rescue efforts just in case.

Mom's trial for '91 killing highlights cold case challenges

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (AP)—An anonymous tip that went nowhere and a 25-year-old blanket could be responsible for solving one of New Jersey's most enduring murder mysteries—was 5-year-old Timothy Wiltsey killed by his own mother?

Jury selection is scheduled this week for the murder trial of Michelle Lodzinski, whom authorities have portrayed as a struggling single mom who blamed her son for a pair of failed romantic relationships. A conviction would provide a measure of vindication for generations of investigators who never bought Lodzinski's claim that Timothy was abducted from a carnival in May 1991.

In an age when countless true-crime shows depict suspects routinely tripped up by DNA extracted from a microscopic fiber or bead of sweat, the case against Lodzinski—with no DNA evidence and no eyewitnesses—will focus attention on the challenges inherent in prosecuting and gaining convictions for long-ago crimes.

"I have seen cold cases with nothing but very small circumstantial evidence be convicted successfully by juries, and I have seen others where physical evidence is overwhelming, yet the actual murderer walks free," said Kenneth Mains, founder of the Williamsport, Pennsylvania-based American Investigative Society of Cold Cases, a nonprofit organization of professional investigators that assists law enforcement.

Middlesex County prosecutors are expected to focus on the evidence that led to Lodzinski's indictment in 2014: Her niece's identification of a blanket found near Wiltsey's body in April 1992, in a marshy area not far from an office where Lodzinski worked. The niece, who often babysat the boy, hadn't been shown the blanket at the time his body was discovered, according to prosecutors.

Even if DNA connected Lodzinski to the blanket, it wouldn't necessarily guarantee a conviction. While advances in DNA testing have led to more convictions—and exonerations—in cold cases in recent years, Mains said, they are not always a slam dunk. In 2012, a Florida jury acquitted a man of sexually assaulting and murdering a woman in 1984, even though DNA linked him to semen found on the victim's body. Similarly, eyewitness testimony, even from an alleged accomplice, won't always convince a jury.

Lodzinski, 48, who was living in Port St. Lucie, Florida, when she was arrested, had told police she lost track of her son at the carnival, then changed her story several times, saying variously that two men or a woman and two men with a young girl abducted Timothy.

While 'affluenza' teen went free, similar case led to prison

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (AP)—One 16-year-old drove drunk, ran a red light and crashed into a pregnant woman's car, killing her and her unborn child. Another drunken teenager rammed a pickup truck into a crowd of people assisting a stranded driver, killing four.

Jaime Arellano went to prison. Ethan Couch went free.

The stories of the two Texas teens illustrate how prosecutors' decisions in similar cases can lead to wildly different outcomes. The poor immigrant from Mexico has been behind bars for almost a decade. The white kid with rich parents got 10 years of probation.

Couch lost control as he drove his family's pickup truck after he and his friends had played beer pong and consumed beer that some of them had stolen from Wal-Mart. The vehicle veered into a crowd of people helping the driver on the side of the road. Authorities later estimated that he was going 70 mph in a 40 mph zone.

The crash fatally injured the stranded motorist, a youth minister who stopped to help her and a mother and daughter who came out of their nearby home.

But prosecutors in Fort Worth said they didn't ask to have his case moved to the adult system because they thought the judge would refuse. Instead, he stayed in juvenile court and became infamous for his psychologist's assertion that his wealthy parents coddled him into a sense of irresponsibility the psychologist called "affluenza."

Arellano was charged with intoxication manslaughter and intoxication assault, the same counts against Couch. But prosecutors in Arellano's case moved quickly after his June 2007 crash to send him to adult court. Arellano took a plea deal and got 20 years in prison, where he remains today.

Sending Arellano's case to the adult system opened the door to the kind of punishment many say Couch should have received from the beginning.

Matt Bingham, the Smith County district attorney and head of the office that prosecuted Arellano, declined to comment on Couch's case but said he considered adult prison to be a fair option for any teenager who has killed someone.

Asia

South Korea's leader warns of North Korea collapse

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's president warned Tuesday that rival North Korea faces collapse if it doesn't abandon its nuclear bomb program, an unusually strong broadside that will likely infuriate Pyongyang.

President Park Geun-hye, in a nationally televised parliamentary address defending her decision to shut down a jointly run factory park in North Korea, said South Korea will take unspecified "stronger and more effective" measures to make North Korea realize its nuclear ambitions will result only in speeding up of its "regime collapse."

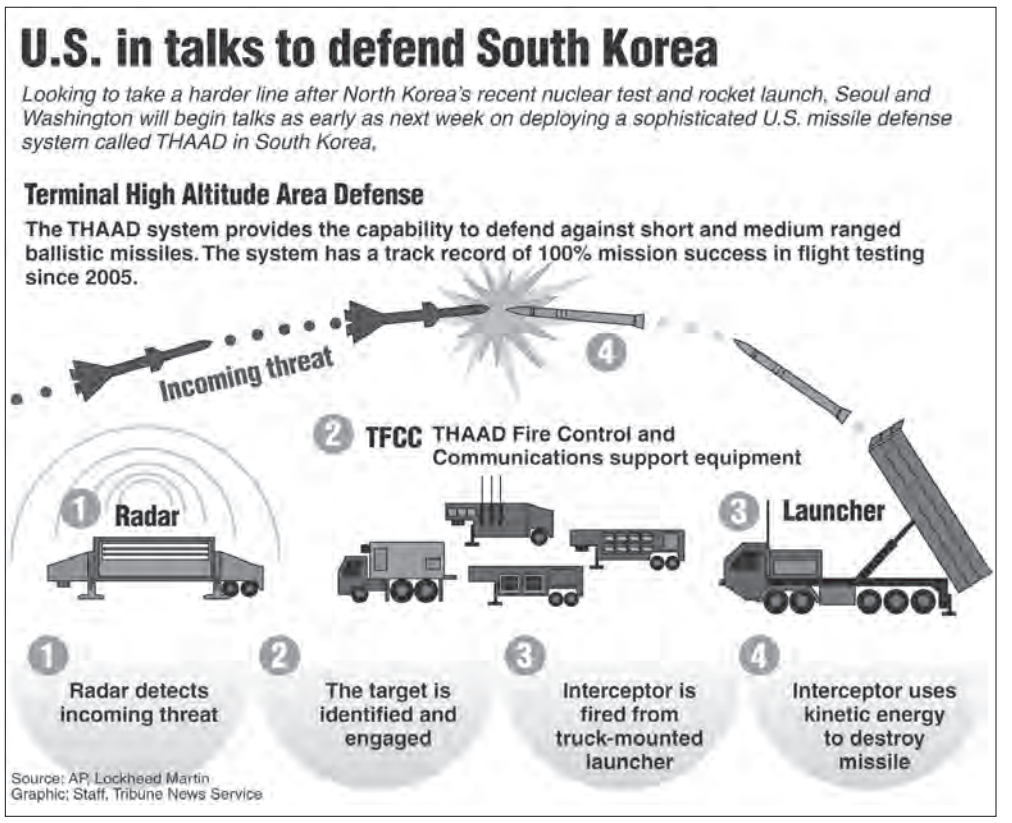
Park shut the facility in response to the North's recent long-range rocket test, which Seoul and Washington see as a test of banned ballistic missile technology. North Korea last month also conducted a nuclear test. Both developments put the country further along it its quest for a nuclear armed missile that could reach the U.S. mainland.

Without elaborating, Park said the North has diverted much of the Seoul payments to North Korean workers at the factory park to the Pyongyang leadership, which is in charge of nuclear and missile development. She also said the South has sent more than $3 billion in government and civilian aid to the North since mid-1990s.

Much of the aid was made when South Korea was governed by back-to-back liberal governments seeking rapprochement with North Korea from 1998 to 2003, according to her office. Park said South Korea must not provide few-strings-attached large-scale aid to North Korea "like in the past."

She called for support for her government amid a divide in South Korea about its tough response to North Korea. "Aiming the point of a sword back to us and splitting us up are something that must not take place," she said.

South Korea's main liberal opposition party has criticized the government's decision to suspend operations at Kaesong, saying the measure will hurt only South Korean businessmen and deepen tensions with North Korea. Liberal lawmakers also said the Kaesong shutdown is not effective because North Korea maintains economic ties with China and Russia.


U.S. in talks to defend South Korea
Looking to take a harder line after North Korea's recent nuclear test and rocket launch, Seoul and Washington will begin talks as early as next week on deploying a sophisticated U.S. missile defense system called THAAD in South Korea.
Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
The THAAD system provides the capability to defend against short and medium ranged ballistic missiles. The system has a track record of 100% mission success in flight testing since 2005.
Incoming threat
2 TFCC THAAD Fire Control and Communications support equipment
1 Radar
3 Launcher
4
1 Radar detects incoming threat
2 The target is identified and engaged
3 Interceptor is fired from truck-mounted launcher
4 Interceptor uses kinetic energy to destroy missile
Source: AP, Lockheed Martin
Graphic: Staff, Tribune News Service

Some analysts have said that without Kaesong as leverage, South Korea's ability to influence change in the North has now evaporated.

It is unusual for a top South Korean official to publicly touch upon such a government collapse in North Korea because of worries about how sensitive North Korea is to talk of its authoritarian government losing power. Pyongyang has long accused Washington and Seoul of agitating for its collapse.

Park's speech contained harsh language, describing North Korea as "merciless" and under an "extreme reign of terror" following recent purges of top officials that outside analysts say were aimed at bolstering leader Kim Jong Un's grip on power. Park also referred to Kim by his name several times when she criticized his government, something many Seoul leaders have avoided in the hopes of improved ties with Pyongyang.

Park's comments are certain to anger North Korea as they were made as the country marks the birthday of late dictator Kim Jong Il, the father of Kim Jong Un.

Seoul officials said North Korea was able to divert the Kaesong payments because the workers there were not paid directly. Instead, U.S. dollars were paid to the North Korean government, which siphoned off most of the money and paid only what it wanted to the employees in North Korean currency and store vouchers, according to a statement from Seoul's' Unification Ministry on Sunday.

The ministry did not detail how it arrived at that conclusion. North Korea has previously dismissed such views.

Suspects brought to court for start of Bangkok bombing trial

BANGKOK (AP)—Two foreigners accused of carrying out a deadly bombing of a Bangkok landmark last year were brought to a military court Tuesday for the start of a highly anticipated trial that's been marred by one accused claiming he was tortured to elicit a confession.

Reporters were allowed inside the courtroom, but were asked to leave their phones, notebooks and pens outside, and officials did not announce to those outside whether the trial had begun. The two men—Bilal Mohammad and Mieraili Yusufu—are facing 10 charges, including conspiracy to explode bombs and commit premeditated murder.

It is expected that they will enter their pleas on Tuesday, which will be followed by questioning and the formal trial. Police are hunting for another 15 suspects, but no progress has been announced.

Authorities have described the suspects as ethnic Uighurs from western China's far western Xinjiang region. They say the Aug. 17 bombing of the Erawan Shrine was revenge by a people-smuggling gang whose activities were disrupted by a crackdown. However, some analysts suspected it might have been the work of Uighur separatists who were angry that Thailand in July forcibly repatriated more than 100 Uighurs to China, where they may be persecuted.

The Erawan Shrine is popular among Chinese tourists, and many were among the victims. Twenty people, including 14 foreign tourists, were killed and more than 120 injured in the bombing, one of the deadliest acts of violence in Bangkok in decades.

An official told reporters before they were led inside the courtroom that authorities were trying to arrange for translators, one who would translate the proceedings in Thai to English, and another who would translate English to the Uighur (pronounced WEE-gur) language, which the defendants had asked for. At their last court appearance in November, the defendants had refused to take a plea because there was no Uighur translator available.

On Monday, Bilal's lawyer, Chuchart Kanpai, told The Associated Press that Bilal avows he was tortured by security personnel into falsely confessing to the attack.

Obama welcomes Southeast Asian leaders to US for talks

RANCHO MIRAGE, Calif. (AP)—President Barack Obama opened a meeting of leaders from a 10-nation bloc of Southeast Asian nations on Monday, calling the landmark gathering on U.S. soil a reflection of his personal commitment to an enduring partnership with the diverse group of countries.

Obama and leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will spend two days discussing economic and regional security issues.

In brief remarks as the leaders sat around a horseshoe-shaped table, Obama said he became familiar with Southeast Asia as a boy living in Indonesia with his mother. Since becoming president, Obama has made numerous trips to Asia-Pacific countries as part of his policy "pivot" toward the region, with the goal of reassuring allies unnerved by China's assertive presence there while also reaping economic gains for the U.S.

"You and the people of ASEAN have always shown me extraordinary hospitality and I hope we can reciprocate with the warmth today and tomorrow, which is why I did not hold this summit in Washington," Obama said.

"It is cold there. It's snowing, so welcome to beautiful, warm Sunnylands," he said. Sunnylands is the storied California desert estate where the leaders will conduct their talks at a conference center with picturesque views of the snow-capped San Jacinto Mountains.

Underscoring the relaxed atmosphere, all leaders wore open-collar shirts with their suits.

It's the first time the leaders of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia have held a stand-alone meeting in the U.S. China is not an ASEAN member, but its territorial claims over disputed waters have raised international concerns and heightened tensions with some member countries.

Obama said trade between the U.S. and ASEAN had increased 55 percent since he took office. The region is now the U.S.'s fourth-largest goods trade partner. U.S. companies are also the largest source of foreign investment in its member nations, he said.

Obama said he wants to build on that progress "so that growth and development is sustainable and inclusive and benefits all people."

Monday's talks will focus on the economy. After a working dinner, the conversation on Tuesday, the summit's final day, shifts to regional security issues, including the South China Sea and counter-terrorism.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Magnitude-6.2 earthquake recorded off New Zealand coast

GOLDEN, Colorado (AP)—A magnitude-6.2 earthquake has been recorded off the coast of New Zealand. The U.S. Geological Survey says the quake struck shortly before 1930 GMT Monday and was centered 136 miles (219 kilometers) northwest of Auckland Island and 735 miles southwest of Wellington. It was at a depth of 6.2 miles. There was no immediate tsunami alert from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

Cambodian tycoon gets short jailing for beating TV presenter

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—A Cambodian court has given a lenient prison sentence to a real estate tycoon whose savage beating of a female TV presenter was seen on video that circulated widely on the Internet. Phnom Penh Municipal Court Judge Sor Lina on Monday sentenced Sok Bun to three years in prison but suspended all but 10 months. Four months of prison time is left after counting time served. In the video taken last July, the tycoon repeatedly punches and kicks Ek Socheatha in the head for about a minute as his bodyguard holds a gun on her.

Student leader's arrest leads to protest at India university

NEW DELHI (AP)—Massive protests paralyzed one of India's top universities Monday after the president of the student union was arrested on charges of sedition. Kanhaiya Kumar was arrested Friday over a demonstration days earlier at Jawaharlal Nehru University to mark the anniversary of the 2013 execution of Afzal Guru, a Kashmiri man convicted of an attack on India's Parliament. A student faction linked to the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party filed a police complaint, and Kumar was arrested amid allegations that anti-India slogans were used at the demonstration.

World

Pope turns eye to Mexico's drug heartland in Michoacan stop

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Pope Francis heads into the heart of Mexico's drug-trafficking country Tuesday for meetings with young people, whom he is holding up as the hope for a better future for a country wracked by the violence and gang warfare of the drug trade.

Francis' visit to Morelia, the capital of Michoacan state, a hotbed of narcotics production and smuggling, will also give him a chance to send a message about his vision for the future of the Mexican church.

Last year, Francis made a cardinal out of Morelia Archbishop Alberto Suarez Inda, one of several "peripheral" bishops elevated to the highest ranks of the church's governance.

Like the pope, Suarez Inda has called for Mexico's church leaders to put aside their comfortable lives and become pastors with the "smell of their sheep." It's a famous phrase of the pope's about the need for bishops to accompany their flock closely through life's ups and downs.

Since beginning his Mexico trip Friday night, Francis has repeatedly taken to task the Mexican church leadership, many of whom have been reluctant to criticize the wealthy and powerful elite to whom they have close ties.

On Saturday in Mexico City, he scolded what he called gossiping, career-minded and aloof clerics, and admonished them to stand by their flock and offer "prophetic courage" in facing down the drug trade. In an inscription in a seminary guestbook, he urged future priests to be pastors of God instead of "clerics of the state."

The pope's stop in Morelia signals that he fully backs Suarez Inda's pastoral program and holds him up as a model for other clerics to emulate.

In 2013, at what was perhaps the height of the violence in Michoacan, Suarez Inda led eight other bishops in signing an unusually outspoken letter accusing government authorities of "complicity, forced or willing," with criminal gangs. It urged priests to "do whatever is in your power" to help people in an atmosphere of kidnappings, killings and extortion and to "carry out concrete actions in favor of peace and reconciliation."

Suarez Inda clearly backs Francis' ideas about the role of clerics in contemporary Mexico, echoing the pope's admonition that "pastors should not be bureaucrats and we bishops should not have the mentality or attitude of princes."

The pope "shakes up the conscience of priests in order that we not be mediocre, installed priests who simply seek social promotion, but rather that we truly live our calling to serve the people with great generosity," Suarez Inda told the Mexican newspaper El Universal last month.

Suarez Inda was also part of a group of clergy from Michoacan and neighboring Guerrero state who prepared a report on Mexico's drug violence last year that he said left Francis "very shocked and impressed."

Francis may outline more of his vision for the church during a Mass celebrated with clerics, seminarians and nuns at a stadium.

But the day's highlight could come in his final event, a gathering of Mexican youth. Francis often speaks off the cuff when meeting with young people, and he will almost certainly touch on the drug problem.

Much of Michoacan is part of a region called Tierra Caliente, or the Hot Lands, known for both its blistering temperatures and brutal tactics by gangsters eager to control lucrative drug-production territory and smuggling routes.

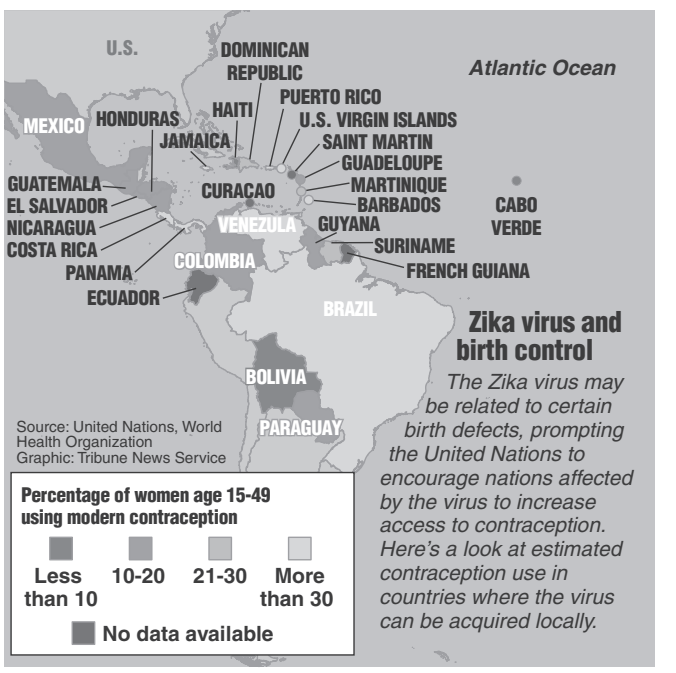
By 2013, the pseudo-religious, evangelical-inspired Knights Templar cartel was widely kidnapping and extorting money and dominating the state's economic and political scene so much that local farmers took up arms against them. But the uprising by the vigilante-style "self-defense" forces brought little peace to the state, with the groups fighting among themselves even as new criminal gangs sprang up or tried to muscle their way into Michoacan, a big source of methamphetamine production.

Pope Francis' trip to Mexico

History's first Latin American pope travels to Mexico for a weeklong tour of some of the most violent, poverty-stricken places in the Americas. He'll be bringing a message of hope and solidarity to victims of drug violence, trafficking and discrimination.

Sources: AP, Vatican
Graphic: Staff/TNS

Doctors: Upsurge in paralysis condition accompanies Zika



Source: United Nations, World Health Organization
Graphic: Tribune News Service

Zika virus and birth control

The Zika virus may be related to certain birth defects, prompting the United Nations to encourage nations affected by the virus to increase access to contraception. Here's a look at estimated contraception use in countries where the virus can be acquired locally.

CUCUTA, Colombia (AP)—The doctor taps Zulay Balza's knees with a hammer and she doesn't feel a thing. She can't squeeze his outstretched fingers or shut her eyelids. Her face is partially paralyzed.

"The weakness started in my legs and climbed upward. The face was last. After three days, I couldn't walk," said Balza, 49. "My legs felt like rags."

Balza is a patient at the public University Hospital in Cucuta, at the epicenter of the Colombian outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus. Only Brazil has more cases.

Two weeks ago, she came under assault by Guillain-Barre (gee-YOHN-bah-RAY), a rare and sometimes fatal affliction that is the Western world's most common cause of general paralysis.

Alarm over the Zika epidemic spreading across the Americas has been chiefly over birth defects, but frontline physicians believe a surge in Guillain-Barre cases may also be related.

The World Health Organization says Guillain-Barre cases are on the rise in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Suriname and Venezuela, all hit hard by Zika, though a link remains unproven.

The auto-immune disorder historically strikes only one or two people in 100,000. About one in 20 of those cases ends in death, and it is frightful.

"I thought my body was going to explode," said Balza, sitting on her hospital bed and apparently over the worst.

Guillain-Barre attacks skeletal muscular nerves as if they were a foreign enemy. Fine motor skills rapidly erode, arms and legs tingle and weaken to numbness. Patients lose their balance, their speech. In rare cases, they require ventilators to stay alive.

The syndrome typically strikes after a bacterial or viral infection, such as influenza, HIV or dengue, though its cause can't always be determined.

Dr. Jairo Lizarazo, the neurologist treating Balza, has seen cases increase more than tenfold since December—30 cases in all—in this muggy city bordering Venezuela. Like Balza, many patients never showed the characteristic symptoms of Zika—fever, rashes, joint pain and conjunctivitis. Four in five don't.

Palestinians renovate church at Jesus' birthplace

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (AP)—After two years of painstaking work, experts have completed the initial phase of a delicate restoration project at the Church of the Nativity, giving a much-needed face-lift to one of Christianity's holiest sites.

The project, partially funded by the Palestinians and conducted by a team of Palestinian and international experts, is the biggest restoration at the iconic church in some 600 years. The removal of centuries of dust has left Crusader-era mosaics sparkling in sunlight filtering through brand new windows. Structural repairs on the fragile rooftop and windows have been completed and art treasures have been returned to their delicate elegance.

Although the Palestinians are overwhelmingly Muslim, they consider the church a national treasure and one of their most visited tourist sites, and President Mahmoud Abbas has been actively involved in the project.

Ziad al-Bandak, who leads the Palestinian committee in charge of the restoration, calls what has been accomplished so far nothing short of "revolutionary."

"For the first time you can see, when you go up, mosaics really magnificent and beautiful and unique in the whole world," he said.

The Church of the Nativity, located in the biblical West Bank town of Bethlehem, was built by Saint Helena in the 4th century over the grotto where the Virgin Mary is said to have given birth to Jesus.

Despite its spiritual significance, the church was neglected for centuries and is listed as endangered by UNESCO, the United Nations cultural agency. Until two years ago, rain leaked through the severely damaged rooftop, threatening to harm priceless artworks inside.

Then, in 2013, the Palestinian Authority, the internationally backed self-rule government, took the lead in financing the restoration. The rest has come from the Palestinian private sector, the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Armenian churches and other countries. Al-Bandak said nearly $8 million has already been spent.

The renovation is being conducted by a joint team of engineers, restoration experts and workers—Palestinians as well as Italians from "Piacenti," a firm which specializes in the renovation of historical sites and has worked on dozens of villas, palaces, churches and monasteries in Italy and Russia.

Deadly airstrikes hit hospitals, school in northern Syria

BEIRUT (AP)—Airstrikes blamed on Russia hit at least two hospitals and a school in northern Syria on Monday, killing and wounding dozens of civilians and further dimming hopes for a temporary truce, as government troops backed by Russian warplanes pressed a major offensive north of Aleppo.

The raids came days after Russia and other world powers agreed to bring about a pause in fighting that would allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid and the revival of peace talks.

The projected truce agreed on Friday in Munich was to begin in a week, but there was no sign that would happen.

On Monday, Syrian state TV reported that pro-government forces have entered the northern town of Tel Rifaat, where they were fighting "fierce battles" against insurgents. Tel Rifaat is a major stronghold of militants fighting to overthrow President Bashar Assad.

Capturing Tel Rifaat would bring government forces closer to their target of Azaz, near the Turkish border.

In Idlib province, an airstrike destroyed a makeshift clinic supported by Doctors Without Borders. The international charity, also known by its French acronym MSF, said the hospital in the town of Maaret al-Numan was hit four times in attacks that were minutes apart. It said seven people were killed and eight others were "missing, presumed dead."

"The destruction of the hospital leaves the local population of around 40,000 people without access to medical services in an active zone of conflict," said MSF mission chief Massimiliano Rebaudengo.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Russian warplanes targeted the hospital, destroying it and killing nine people. The opposition group, which tracks both sides of the conflict through sources on the ground, said dozens were wounded in the attack.

"The entire building has collapsed on the ground," said opposition activist Yahya al-Sobeih, speaking by phone from Maaret al-Numan. He said five people were killed near the MSF clinic and "all members of the medical team inside are believed to be dead."

Focus

Russia presses air blitz in Syria to dictate peace terms

AP
Turkish artillery fire from the border near Kilis toward northern Syria, in Kilis, Turkey, Monday, Feb. 15, 2016.

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW (AP) — Moscow joined the fight in Syria to return to relevance in international diplomacy. It has succeeded by anyone's measure - and Russia hopes to use its air power to dictate the terms of a cease-fire and prospective peace talks.

Russian warplanes have helped the Syrian army make broad advances and close in on the country's biggest city, Aleppo. Meanwhile, the Western-backed opposition is fractured and weakened.

So as talk turns to a cease-fire, Syrian President Bashar Assad, Moscow's sole ally in the region, is in a stronger position than he has been in years.

What's more, Russia has cast itself as an indispensable global player that holds the key to the settlement of a nearly five-year conflict that has flooded Europe with refugees. And the United States can't hope to push forward its agenda of ending the war without overtures to Russia.

Not that there aren't challenges ahead for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other regional players that have backed Assad's foes are loath to see the Syrian ruler strengthen his grip on power. They have been mulling the deployment of ground troops to Syria, which could trigger broader hostilities and raise the threat of confrontation between their forces and the Russian military.

For its part, the U.S. sees Assad as the chief obstacle to peace and has been reluctant to engage in any military-to-military dialogue with Russia.

Still, Putin appears eager to raise the stakes, hoping that Assad's siege of Aleppo will further strengthen Russia's hand.

The impact of Moscow's air strikes appears particularly significant given the modest size of the Russian force - just a few dozen jets. But they have operated at a frenetic pace, each flying several sorties a day for a total of more than 6,000 combat missions in 4Ω months.

The campaign, Russia's first military operation outside the former Soviet Union since the 1991 Soviet collapse, has demonstrated the new capability of the nation's resurgent military and allowed Russia to test its latest weapons in combat for the first time.

In one example, the military tested its new long-range cruise missiles, firing them from all possible launch platforms—strategic bombers, surface warships in the Caspian Sea and a submarine near Syria.

Moscow has denied any intention to open more air bases in Syria in addition to the Hemeimeem air base in Syria's coastal province of Latakia, the well-protected heartland of Assad's Alawite sect. The Russian military says it makes little sense to allocate extra assets since it takes just 15 minutes for Russian warplanes from Hemeimeem to reach any area in Syria.

Russia has deployed an unidentified number of advisers to train Syrian troops to use Russian weapons and help coordinate air attacks, but Putin has firmly ruled out ground action.

By operating from Hemeimeem, which lies deep inside government-controlled territory, Moscow has minimized the risk of casualties from militant incursions. So far, the Russian military has lost three men in Syria: a pilot killed when his warplane was downed by a Turkish jet in November, a marine who died on a mission to rescue that pilot's crewmate, and a Russian military adviser who died in mortar shelling at the front line.

By limiting its presence in Syria, the Kremlin has been able to keep spending on its military action to an estimated $2 million to $4 million a day, an amount easily sustainable even for the crisis-stricken Russian economy. At such costs, the Kremlin could maintain its air campaign indefinitely.

There is no such reservoir of patience among America's European allies, who struggle to cope with the continuing influx of refugees from the conflict.

Russia began its air campaign on Sept. 30, nearly five years after the war began, and the impact soon became visible as Assad's military launched a multi-pronged offensive. The main Syrian army efforts are now focusing on Aleppo, Syria's largest city and commercial capital, which has been split between the government and its opponents since 2012.

In recent weeks, Assad's troops backed by Hezbollah and Iranian forces have methodically cut supply lines, forcing more than 50,000 civilians to flee to the nearby Turkish border. Russian warplanes flying up to 70 sorties a day have maintained constant pressure on the anti-government forces, striking their strongholds and depots and chasing their convoys.

There are risks to the strategy, as can be seen in Russian-Turkish tensions after NATO member Turkey shot down the Russian jet. And in the crowded skies over Syria, U.S. officials say Russian pilots often perform risky maneuvers, flying extremely close to the U.S. warplanes.

Moscow and Washington have agreed to exchange information about air operations over Syria to prevent incidents, but Russia has pushed for broader coordination. Putin apparently hopes that engaging the U.S. in military-to-military cooperation in Syria could help ease the strain in relations and also cast Moscow as a power equaling the U.S.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said last week that close coordination between U.S. and Russian military experts would be essential for securing a cease-fire. But Russia also vows to press its air assault against extremist groups, making clear that Moscow is in no rush to stop fighting.

Putin appears ready to gamble that things will keep going his way.

Good Housekeeping

DIGGIN' IN:

Counting birds, counts during National Bird Feeding month

By KATHY VAN MULLEKOM
DAILY PRESS

Bird-watching is an entertaining and educational way for young and old to pass boring winter days. Even preschool kids can participate and practice their counting and color recognition skills.

Counting birds becomes even more important during the Great Backyard Bird Count Feb. 12-15.

Scientists use your data to analyze bird populations, migration patterns, habitat needs and identify endangered species. Data will be powered by eBird (www.eBird.org), an online checklist program for all of the world's 10,240 bird species, according to a news release. This year's count is the first time it's open to birders worldwide. Birders can view what others see on interactive maps, keep their own records and have their tallies recorded.

It's easy to participate in the bird count — just count for as little as 15 minutes or as long as you want. Count birds you see at feeders or at local parks, fields and woodlands — anywhere you happen to go. Then tally the numbers of each species you see, and report your findings online at www.BirdCount.org.

Sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society with Bird Studies Canada, the four-day event helps scientists study migration patterns and overall population numbers.

"Birding is a wonderful hobby for all ages and a wonderful window into natural world," says Shirley Devan, a Williamsburg, Va., resident who documents her many birding activities on Facebook. She's also a member of the Williamsburg Bird Club.

"I love watching the birds interact around the feeders. For example, Carolina chickadees grab a seed from the feeder and fly back to a protected spot to eat it — then, return for another seed and fly away. On the other hand, American goldfinches take a seat at the buffet table, or tube feeder, and hang out for quite a while as if they are at a coffee shop using the Wi-Fi."

Great Backyard Bird Count participants can count backyard birds from the comfort of home or count in an outdoor setting of choice.

MCT
A first-year male Baltimore oriole feeds on suet inside a caged feeder.

Seeds birds like

February is National Bird-Feeding Month, a time to put out seed and suet that brings birds to your backyard feeders where you can watch them.

"Not all birds fly south for the winter," says Richard Cole of Cole's Wild Bird Feed — http://coleswildbird.com.

"Those who do are likely looking for their favorite foods — nectar, insects or fruit — that aren't usually available when the weather turns cold. Birds that eat seed are more likely to stay put, and that means you can entice them to your backyard by serving their preferred varieties."

■ Dried mealworms: bluebirds.

■ Sunflower meats: bluebirds, warblers, robins and woodpeckers.

■ Sunflower: chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, cardinals, grosbeaks, sparrows, blackbirds and jays.

■ White millet: ground-feeding birds like towhees, juncos, song sparrows, doves and Indigo bunting.

■ Safflower: cardinal, chickadees and titmice.

■ Nyger, or thistle: finches.

- Corn: jays.

■ Suet: most birds; woodpeckers especially like peanut-filled suet.

■ Keep feeders clean

Songbirds may not mind eating from dirty feeders but feeder cleanliness helps prevent them from getting a common eye disease, according to research led by scientists at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va.

Researchers monitored the social and foraging behaviors of wild flocks of house finches, a common backyard songbird, and the spread of a naturally-occurring bird disease called Mycoplasmal conjunctivitis, according to a news release. The disease is similar to "pink eye" in humans but cannot be contracted by humans. Infected birds have red, swollen eyes that can lead to blindness, and ultimately, death, as a result of not being able to see.

Feeding birds isn't a bad thing for humans to do, as it helps birds survive the winter. However, the researchers recommend that bird feeders be cleaned and disinfected each time they are refilled to help reduce the likelihood of spreading disease.

Pampered birds

In Williamsburg, Kathi Mestayer goes to great lengths to make sure her backyard birds are pampered during cold weather. She shovels snow and ice off leaf litter in the wooded area, so the birds have easy access to the leaf litter for foraging.

"After we did that, juncos and sparrows and Carolina wrens were all over it," she says.

To make homemade suet for cold weather feeding, Mestayer saves bacon grease in the fridge. Then, she lets it warm up to room temperatures, adds peanut butter at the ratio of one-third bacon grease, two-thirds peanut butter; birdseed, grape nuts, other nuts and hot sauce are added to the mixture.

At night, Mestayer brings the bird bath indoors to sit in the laundry sink where it comes to room temperature instead of freezing over again. The next morning, she puts it outdoors and fills it again.

"It's a lot easier than trying to chip the ice off it," she says.

Kathy Van Mullekom is the garden/home columnist for the Daily Press in Newport News, Va.

"The Living Bird: 100 Years of Listening to Nature" marks the 100th anniversary of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's bird research.

TheCornellLab of Ornithology
Photography by Gerrit Vyn
Foreword by Barbara Kingsolver
100 Years of Listening to Nature
THE LIVING BIRD

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING ONE

Slow Cooker Chicken Pot Pie

This recipe from our sister publication Woman's Day gets to the heart of what makes pot pie so good: the creamy chicken filling. It's so tasty, you can skip the puff pastry altogether and just serve it with some crusty bread on the side, if you prefer.

1/2 cup dry white wine
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
Kosher salt and pepper
4 medium carrots
2 stalk celery
1 onion
1 1/2 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs
1 sheet frozen puff pastry
1 egg
1 cup frozen peas
3 tablespoons fresh dill sprigs

1. In a 5- to 6-qt slow cooker, whisk together the wine, flour, 1/2 cup water, and 1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper.

2. Add carrots, celery, onion and chicken, and toss to combine. Cook, covered, until chicken is cooked through and easily pulls apart, 6 to 7 hours on low or 4 to 5 hours on high.

3. When the chicken has 30 minutes left to cook, heat oven to 400 F. Cut puff pastry into 8 rectangles and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Brush with the egg and bake until puffed and golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes.

4. Gently fold peas and dill into the chicken and vegetables and cook, covered, until heated through, about 3 minutes. Spoon into bowls, sprinkle with additional dill if desired, and top with the puff pastry. Serves 4.

For thousands of triple-tested recipes, visit our website at www.goodhousekeeping.com/recipes/.

Life & Style

Eagles of Death Metal frontman back in Paris to finish show

AP

In this Dec. 8, 2015 file photo, members of the band Eagles of Death Metal, Jesse Hughes, right, and Julian Dorio pay their respects to 89 victims who died in a Nov. 13 attack at the Bataclan concert hall in Paris, France.

By DANA SCHIMMEL
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eagles of Death Metal frontman Jesse Hughes has returned to Paris, saying he feels a "sacred" responsibility to finish the band's show that was interrupted by gunfire, but adds that the terror attacks haven't changed his view on guns.

Islamic extremists massacred 89 people at the band's Nov. 13 performance at the Bataclan, which has been closed since the attacks across Paris that left 130 dead and 350 others wounded.

"There's been just such an outpouring of support for us and love for us. It's overwhelming. I just don't want to let anyone down," Hughes said of the band's upcoming performance at the Olympia Theatre in Paris on Tuesday.

He made the remarks during an emotional interview with iTELE's Laurence Ferrari on Monday.

"This show I'm supposed to put up like a barrier against anything that's not fun and that we're really just supposed to have fun there tomorrow. I think that's what we really need to do is just have fun together so that we can put some of this (expletive) behind us and really leave it there so it doesn't follow us around for the rest of our lives," Hughes said while breaking down into tears.

Hughes told iTELE that he's been unable to control his emotions since the attacks.

"I haven't had any nightmares and I've slept fine but when I'm awake is when I see things that are nightmares," he said.

Asked if the trauma he and others experienced has changed his views on gun control, Hughes, co-founder of the band, said he believes everyone should be armed.

"I think the only way that my mind has been changed is that maybe until nobody has guns everybody has to have them. Because I don't ever want to see anything like this ever happen again and I want everyone to have the best chance to live and I saw people die that maybe could have lived," he said.

"I wish I knew for sure if they could have had a better chance because there were some real angels, real wonderful people in that show that aren't alive today and I really wish they were."

Author Pat Conroy has pancreatic cancer, promises hard fight

AP

In this May 16, 2014, file photo, author Pat Conroy speaks to a crowd during a ceremony at the Hollings Library in Columbia, S.C. Conroy says he has pancreatic cancer, but promises he will fight the disease hard and finish a novel he owes his fans.

BEAUFORT, S.C. (AP)— Author Pat Conroy says he has pancreatic cancer, but promises he will fight the disease hard and finish a novel he owes his fans.

The 70-year-old South Carolina novelist made the announcement Monday on his Facebook page.

Conroy didn't give many details about his diagnosis or a prognosis. But he promised to "fight it hard" and told his fans "I owe you a novel and I intend to deliver it."

Conroy has written a dozen books including "The Prince of Tides" and "The Great Santini." On Facebook, Conroy says he has spent his entire life trying to figure out who he is and he doesn't believe he has come close.

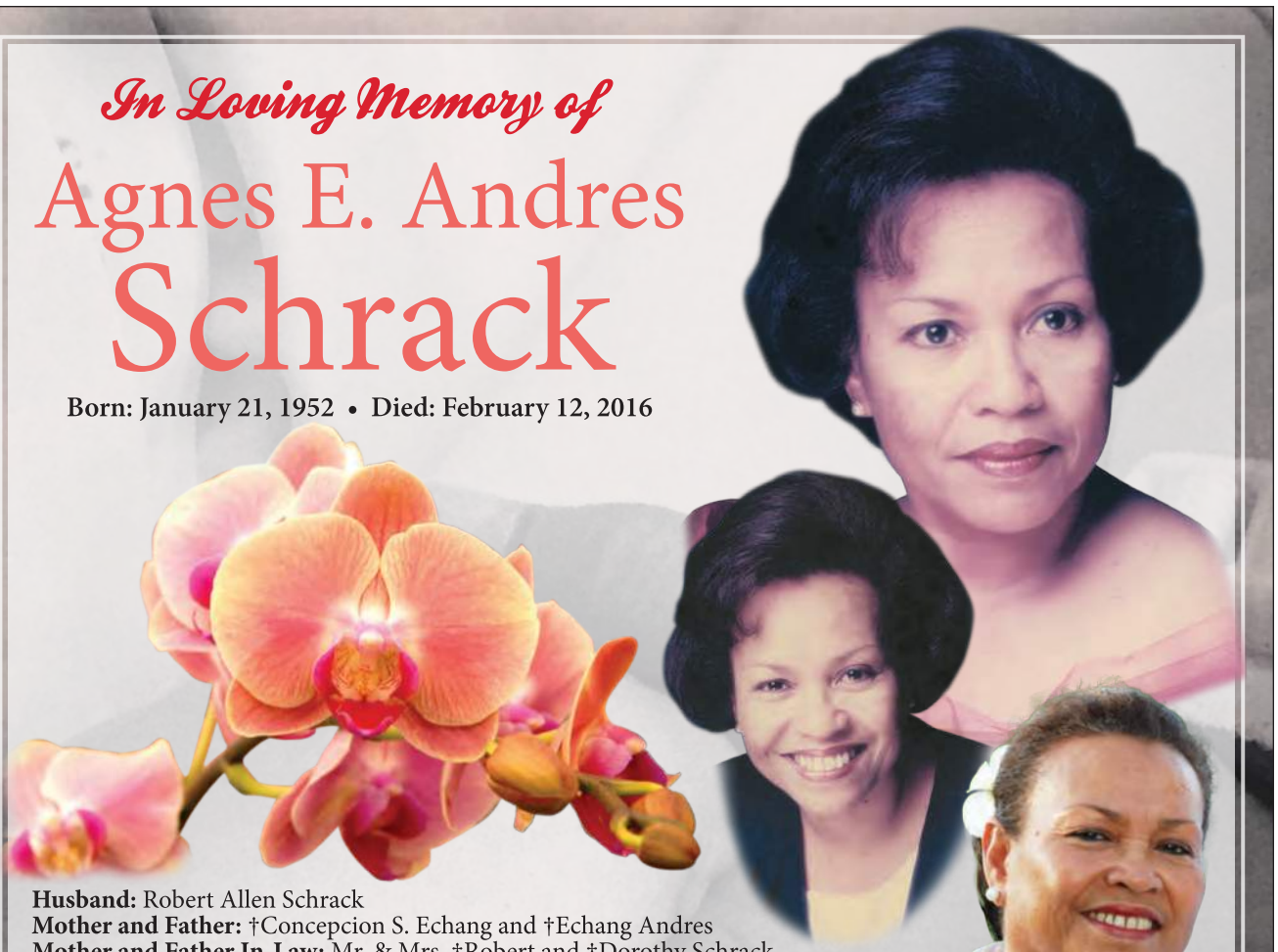
He quit drinking in his mid-60s after being hospitalized with a failing liver and high blood pressure. He has struggled with diabetes and other ailments in recent years.

Pancreatic cancer is one of the deadliest cancers and can be difficult to treat.

In Loving Memory of

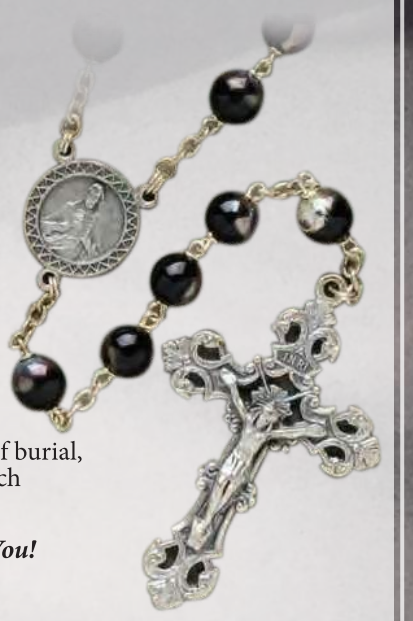
Agnes E. Andres Schrack

Born: January 21, 1952 • Died: February 12, 2016



Husband: Robert Allen Schrack
Mother and Father: †Concepcion S. Echang and †Echang Andres
Mother and Father In-Law: Mr. & Mrs. †Robert and †Dorothy Schrack
Mothers by Heart: Ms. Susana Blau (†Betty, Gayline, Cris, Lorie, †Katherine, Imaculada, †Nobert, Duffy, Shun, Jack) and Ms. Maria A. Stole (Ginnie, Jesse)
Children/Stepchildren:
Mr. & Mrs. Doveline and Vanessa Andres (Irenia, Damian, Anica, Derrence, Manel Jr., Jesus)
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph and Regina Villacrusis (Raegine, Tyler, Jaden, Sebastian, Shayden, Kya and Aliiyah)
Mr. & Mrs. Marshon and Darlene Mongami (Brett, Mars, Brandee, Matt, Maxx & †Macc)
Erika Schrack & Jason Jonah
Lindsay Anne Schrack
Sisters:
Mr. & Mrs. Paulus and Columba Stol Temol (†Jordana Echang and †Leo Masters (Leo, August & Amanda) Lerins and Thomasa Stole (Angel, Jenny, Guliermo, & Herby)
Mr. & Mrs.†Salvino and Justina N. Bultedaob (Estella, Phillip, Paloma & Calvin)
†Ms. Betty Blau (Vanessa)
Ms. Gayline Blau (Wriik and Oilang)
Mr. & Mrs. Richard and Viola (Cris) Chisholm (Nathan and †Alex)
Ms. Lorie Blau (Douglas)
†Ms. Katherine Blau (†Shoudy, JJ Lewis)
Mr. & Mrs. †Sidonio and Imaculada Blibei (Isang, Trachol, Tomei, Jim)
Brothers:
Mr. Nicolas (Sabo) and Frances Ramon (Debbie, Blumel, Antonette, Nick & Manny)
†Mr. Nobert Blau
Mr. Serafin (Duffy) Blau (Ryan)
Mr. Julius (Shun) Blau (Hoover, Christine, Kenneth, Melody, Jamie)
Mr. Jack Blau
Brother-in-laws:
Bruce W. Schrack (Caitlin, Samantha)
Eric J. & Kay Schrack (Brookley & Jason Youther, Lauren & Taylor Harris)

Survived by numerous Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Relatives and Friends.



Nightly Mass and Rosary at San Antonio Church at 6:00pm. On the day of burial, February 23, 2016, Responso will be at 7:45am at San Antonio Church and Mass of Christian Burial will be at 11:00am.

Mesulang, Melau, Si Yu'us Ma'ase and Thank You!

Andres-Schrack Family

Taylor Swift wins top Grammy Award, Kendrick Lamar wins 5

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Taylor Swift's official switch from country to pop with her multi-hit, best-selling "1989" album brought the singer her second Grammy Award win for album of the year.

Swift was shocked when she won the night's top prize, beating out Kendrick Lamar, Chris Stapleton, Alabama Shakes and the Weeknd. Swift used her speech to encourage young women who feel defeated at times or discouraged by others.

"There will be people along the way that will try to undercut your success or take credit for your accomplishments or your fame. You just focus on the work and don't let those people sidetrack you," she said.

Her speech could be directed partly to Kanye West, who recently said in a new song that he made Swift famous after he stole her microphone at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards.

Beyonce also seemed to make a statement when she presented the final award for the night, record of the year.

"Art is the unapologetic celebration of culture through self-expression. It can impact people in a variety of ways for different reasons at different times. Some will react. Some will respond. And some will be moved," she said, seeming to speak to those who were critical of her Super Bowl performance of the anthem, "Formation."

Swift, who won the album of the year Grammy for "Fearless" in 2009, walked away Monday with three awards, including best pop vocal album and music video for "Bad Blood," at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Alabama Shakes also won three awards, though Lamar was the night's big winner with five.

He won best rap album for "To Pimp a Butterfly" as well as rap performance, rap song, rap/sung performance and music video. Along with his wins, Lamar also had a show-stopping moment when he took the stage.

AP

Taylor Swift poses in the press room with the awards for album of the year for 1989, pop vocal album for 1989 and best music video for "Bad Blood" at the 58th annual Grammy Awards at the Staples Center on Monday, Feb. 15, 2016, in Los Angeles.

He started as he appeared beaten, in handcuffs, with chains around his hands and a bruise on his eyes. He went on to fuse rap, jazz, reggae and African sounds for a commanding performance as he rapped "The Blacker the Berry" and the Grammy-nominated "Alright" passionately. He ended with a map of Africa, and the city of Compton imprinted in it.

"Hip-hop, Ice Cube, this for hip-hop, this for Snoop Dogg ...this for Nas. We will live forever, believe that," said Lamar onstage when he won best rap album.

Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars won two awards for "Uptown Funk," including record of the year. Ronson gave a shout-out to Prince, James Brown and George Clinton for being leaders in funk.

"This is dedicated to the fans right here," Mars added.

Mars introduced Adele, who sang "All I Ask," which they wrote together for her new album "25." She was accompanied with a piano behind her, but the audio sounded off and appeared to throw off her performance.

"The piano mics fell onto the piano strings, that's what the guitar sound was. It made it sound out of tune," Adele tweeted. "(Expletive) happens."

A spokesperson for CBS, where the Grammys aired, said "there was a brief 5-8 second technical issue that was out of our control."

Justin Bieber started "Love Yourself" on guitar in good form, but ended with a vocal struggle. Little Big Town and Demi Lovato, however, had shining moments during their performances, hitting impressive and smooth high notes.

But Bieber also had a shining moment: He won his first Grammy on Monday night for best dance recording for "Where Are U Now" with Skrillex and Diplo.

The Grammys also marked first-time wins for Alabama Shakes, the Weeknd, Stapleton, Pitbull and Ed Sheeran, who won song of the year for "Thinking out Loud."

"We wrote it on a couch in my house," he said of his hit song he wrote with Amy Wadge, which also won him best pop solo performance.

Alabama Shakes' three wins included best alternative music album for "Sound & Color," as well as rock song and rock performance for "Don't Wanna Fight," which they performed.

"My heart is beating a mile a minute," said frontwoman Brittany Howard. "I promise we're going to keep going."

The Weeknd, who won two awards, performed in a cube that was brightly lit for "Can't Feel My Face" until he switched to a piano-tinged version of his upbeat hit "In the Night." Stapleton, who has written for dozens of country acts, won best country solo performance and country album for "Traveller."

"This is something you never ever dream of so I'm super grateful for it," he said.

Stapleton lost best country song to "Girl Crush" songwriters Liz Rose, Hillary Lindsey and Lori McKenna, while the group behind "Girl Crush"—Little Big Town—won best country duo/group performance for the hit track.

The Grammys featured a number of performances, including touching tributes: Lady Gaga was in David Bowie-inspired makeup and gear as she ran through 10 of the icon's hits, including "Space Oddity," ''Changes," ''Fame," ''Let's Dance" and "Heroes."

B.B. King was remembered with a rousing performance by Stapleton, Gary Clark. Jr and Bonnie Raitt—all on guitar and vocals—with "The Thrill Is Gone."

The Hollywood Vampires, a supergroup of Johnny Depp, Alice Cooper and Joe Perry, performed in their first televised performance and honored Motorhead's Lemmy Kilmister. Stevie Wonder, joined with Grammy-winning a capella group Pentatonix, sang "That's the Way of the World" in honor of Earth, Wind & Fire's Maurice White, while members of the Eagles and Jackson Browne sang "Take It Easy" for Glenn Frey.

Rihanna, who was supposed to perform near the top of the show, couldn't due to doctor's orders.

"Rihanna's doctor put her on vocal rest for 48 hours because she was at risk of hemorrhaging her vocal chords," a statement from her representative read.

Recording Academy CEO said Lauryn Hill, who was supposed to surprise the audience by performing with the Weeknd, said Hill showed up for dress rehearsal but didn't make it in time for the show. The academy never officially announced Hill was performing.

"She was invited by (the Weeknd)," Portnow said backstage.

Collaborative performances were one of the themes of the Grammys: Carrie Underwood sang with Sam Hunt; Ellie Goulding and Andra Day performed; and while Lovato, Legend, Luke Bryan and Tyrese sang with Lionel Richie to honor the icon.

Meghan Trainor, who was nominated for two Grammys last year for "All About That Bass," won best new artist.

"Thank you to the Grammys, I love you so much," said a teary-eyed Trainor, who also thanked her parents and Epic Records CEO L.A. Reid.

Other winners included D'Angelo, Kirk Franklin, Jason Isbell, Tony Bennett, the cast of Broadway's smash "Hamilton" and Jeff Bhasker.

Lauryn Hill a no-show for The Weeknd Grammys performance

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Grammy organizers were expecting Lauren Hill to make a surprise appearance during The Weeknd's performance Monday night, but the singer was a no-show.

Recording Academy President Neil Portnow said Hill showed up for a dress rehearsal Monday morning but left and didn't come back.

"We were ready up until the moment of the downbeat of that performance for her to step on the stage," Portnow said, addressing one of several unexpected moments during Monday's telecast.

Sound issues hampered Adele's performance and a health issue forced Rihanna to cancel her planned performance.

Portnow said Hill was invited by The Weeknd to join him on his song "In the Night." She was supposed to come onstage during the second verse.

"It was intended to be a surprise," Portnow said.

His comments dispute a statement by Hill's representative that said her performance was announced prematurely by the Grammys and "without approval." The Academy didn't announce Hill would perform, but the plan leaked on Instagram.

"None of that statement is accurate," Portnow said. "We did not announce her. She made the dress rehearsal and did not show up for the actual performance."

Hill's rep says the singer had concerts all weekend, which left her no time to prepare for the Grammys.

The 40-year-old singer won five Grammys in 1999, including album of the year and best new artist, for her lone solo album, "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill." She was the first woman to win five Grammys in a single year.

She has had a sporadic and erratic career since her Grammys wins. Last year, the former member of The Fugees canceled a show in Israel after she was unable to schedule a performance in the Palestinian city of Ramallah.

She pleaded guilty in 2012 to tax evasion for failure to pay federal income tax and the following year served a three-month prison sentence.

Rihanna also had to cancel her planned performance at Monday's show on doctor's orders that she might damage her vocal cords if she sang after she had been ill in recent days.

Select winners at the Grammy Awards

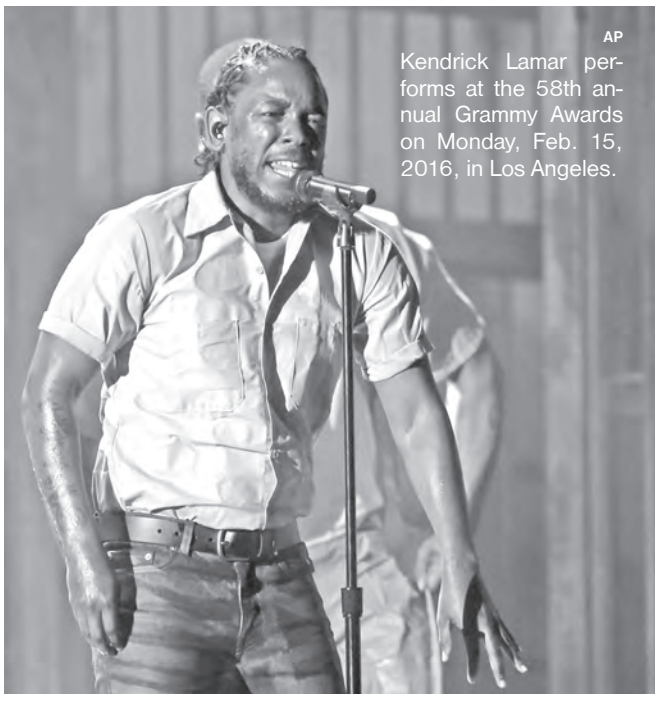
Select winners at the 58th annual Grammy Awards:

- **Song of the year (songwriter's award):** "Thinking Out Loud," Ed Sheeran and Amy Wadge.
- **Best pop solo performance:** "Thinking Out Loud," Ed Sheeran.
- **Best pop duo/group performance:** "Uptown Funk," Mark Ronson featuring Bruno Mars.
- **Best traditional pop vocal album:** "The Silver Lining: The Songs of Jerome Kern," Tony Bennett and Bill Charlap.
- **Best pop vocal album:** "1989," Taylor Swift.
- **Best dance recording:** "Where Are U Now," Skrillex and Diplo with Justin Bieber.
- **Best dance/electronic album:** "Skrillex And Diplo Present Jack U," Skrillex and Diplo.
- **Best metal performance:** "Cirice," Ghost.
- **Best rock song:** Alabama Shakes' "Don't Wanna Fight."
- **Best rock album:** "Drones," Muse.
- **Best alternative music album:** "Sound & Color," Alabama Shakes.
- **Best urban contemporary album:** "Beauty Behind the Madness," The Weeknd.
- **Best R&B song:** D'Angelo and The Vanguard's "Really Love."
- **Best R&B performance:** "Earned It (Fifty Shades of Grey)," The Weekend.
- **Best R&B album:** "Black Messiah," D'Angelo and The Vanguard.
- **Best rap performance:** "Alright," Kendrick Lamar.
- **Best rap/sung collaboration:** "These Walls," Kendrick Lamar Featuring Bilal, Anna Wise and Thundercat.
- **Best rap album:** "To Pimp a Butterfly," Kendrick Lamar.
- **Best rap song:** Kendrick Lamar's "Alright."
- **Best country album:** "Traveller," Chris Stapleton.
- **Best country solo:** "Traveller," Chris Stapleton.
- **Best country duo/group performance:** "Girl Crush," Little Big Town.
- **Best country song:** Little Big Town's "Girl Crush."

(AP)

Kendrick, Lady Gaga create memorable Grammy moments

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The Grammys had some technical stumbles this year, but also some unforgettable moments from Kendrick Lamar to Lady Gaga and a Broadway smash. Here are a few of the top moments from the 58th annual Grammy Awards:



AP

Kendrick Lamar performs at the 58th annual Grammy Awards on Monday, Feb. 15, 2016, in Los Angeles.

KING KENDRICK REIGNS

Kendrick Lamar's cinematic and energetic performance shined at a Grammys show full of slow songs and ballads. He started the performance shackled in chains singing "The Blacker the Berry," but broke free to perform his anthem "Alright" in front of a massive bonfire.

He ended the performance in front of an image of a map of Africa labeled with the name of his California hometown of Compton. It was a true Grammy moment, one that was deftly executed, daring and culturally significant.

Lamar was the big winner of the night with five trophies and although he did not take home album or song of the year, the Recording Academy showed that they are not so stuffy that they can't recognize a musical vanguard.

After winning rap album of the year for "To Pimp a Butterfly," he was gracious and respectful of all the great rappers to come before him. He earned salutes from the White House's official Twitter account, pop star Taylor Swift and even Adele after her own performance.

'HAMILTON' SURPRISES NO ONE

The massive success of "Hamilton" earned the Broadway musical a performance spot on the Grammys telecast, the first time the Grammys made room for a Broadway show since 2010. The young African-American and Latino cast performed via broadcast feed from New York and playwright Lin-Manuel Miranda's varied score mixing pop, R&B and rap fit perfectly on the Grammy show.

The best part was when, minutes after their performance, the cast rushed back onstage to accept the Grammy for best musical theater album and Miranda delivered his acceptance speech in verse.

LADY GAGA HONORS BOWIE

Lady Gaga and producer Nile Rodgers put together a memorable tribute to the musical chameleon David Bowie, complete with her bright red hair, costumes reflecting his unique styles and splashy technical visuals.

She managed to fit together snippets of 10 of his iconic songs, including "Space Oddity" and "Heroes," into a psychedelic sing-along as she danced all over the stage.

It was clearly a performance that Lady Gaga put her whole heart into, even posting an Instagram video of her crying as she listened to the late rocker's song, "Blackstar," before taking the stage.

TAYLOR DOESN'T NEED KANYE

Donning a new bob and a sparkly jumpsuit, Taylor Swift opened the 2016 Grammys with a performance of "Out of the Woods," but correctly noted—for one night—it was actually "1989," the title of her best-selling album. Backed by Jack Antonoff on guitar, Swift sounded triumphant as she walked through the audience while glitter rained down inside the Staples Center.

Everyone was wondering if anyone at the Grammys would mention Kanye West' latest diss of the pop star, who claimed in a new song lyric that he made her famous.

She didn't need to name drop him in her acceptance speech for album of the year for "1989," but delivered a strong rebuke against those she said would try to "take credit for your accomplishments or your fame."

STELLAR SINGERS TAKE THE STAGE

The Weeknd continues to impress on big stages and delivered another stirring performance of "In the Night," backed by a piano and a cellist.

Because the Grammys are so often dominated by pop, it was a rare treat to see Bonnie Raitt join standout country singer Chris Stapleton and Gary Clark Jr. for "The Thrill Is Gone," a soulful tribute to the late blues legend B.B. King. They are all excellent musicians who let the guitars do the singing for once.

Lady Gaga on Bowie tribute: Most difficult thing I've done

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lady Gaga says paying tribute to the late David Bowie at the Grammys is probably the most challenging thing she's done in career because the icon influenced her greatly and helped shape her identity.

Gaga performed an extended tribute to Bowie at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on Monday, channeling the legend as Ziggy Stardust as she ran through his hits, including "Space Oddity," ''Let's Dance," ''Changes" and "Heroes."

Days before the performance, she said in an interview with The Associated Press that performing in his honor was a bittersweet way to say goodbye to one of her inspirations.

"When I was 19 years old ... I started to live my life like him. I began to consume art and fashion and art history and a combination of those things, performance technique ... and I only hung out with people that were artists and that was the way that he was and I learned that from him," she said. "What I'm trying to say is there's people that love David Bowie, and then there's David Bowie fans, and there's Bowie kids, who live like him ...and I can't express to you, I don't know who I'd be if I didn't have (him as) a figure in my life. I don't know what my identity would be."

Bowie died of cancer at age 69 on Jan. 10. Gaga said she never met Bowie, but that they "were pen pals."

AP

Lady Gaga performs a tribute to David Bowie at the 58th annual Grammy Awards on Monday, Feb. 15, 2016, in Los Angeles.

'Star Wars: Episode VIII' starts filming, adds del Toro

NEW YORK (AP)—"Star Wars: Episode VIII" has begun filming and has added Benicio del Toro and Laura Dern to its cast.

The Walt Disney Co. announced that "Episode VIII" started principal photography at London's Pinewood Studios on Monday. Written and directed by Rian Johnson, the "Star Wars" sequel will follow J.J. Abrams' box-office smash "The Force Awakens." It's set for release in December 2017.

Joining returning cast members are the Oscar-winning del Toro, the Oscar-nominated Dern and newcomer Kelly Marie Tran.

The production start announcement was accompanied by a brief video that showed shooting picking up right where "The Force Awakens" left off. (Stop here if you don't want to read a reference to the ending of "The Force Awakens.") Johnson is shown directing Mark Hamill (Luke Skywalker) on a remote island off the coast of Ireland.

Painful topic of spousal sex abuse is swept under the rug

DEAR ABBY: There is a topic I haven't seen addressed in your column, namely being sexually abused by a spouse. I ended my marriage because my husband was waking me at 2 a.m. demanding sex. He expected me to have sex only a week after I had our baby, although my doctor had said I should wait six weeks. If I thought something he wanted me to do was degrading, he insisted I do it anyway.

It amazes me that the subject of spousal abuse isn't mentioned in premarital counseling. No one seems willing to acknowledge this kind of abuse exists. Is there even a "survivors" network or support group to cope? I went to individual counseling, but it didn't help me.

I think it would be helpful if society would acknowledge this kind of thing does happen. I also think that those who offer premarital counseling should be required to discuss the warning signs of a sexual abuser.

THE EX MRS. BROWN

DEAR EX MRS. BROWN: It is interesting that this topic isn't addressed more often, because domestic violence can happen to anyone and it shouldn't be overlooked. No one has the right to coerce a partner into doing something she or he doesn't want to do, whether it's done through physical violence or relentless verbal abuse.

When there is forced sex in a marriage, the name for it is marital or spousal rape. Like any other kind of rape, it is not an act of love but a way of asserting control and dominance. If you contact the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), it should be able to refer you to a support group for survivors. The toll-free number to call is 800-656-4673. (You can also find it online at rainn.org.)

DEAR ABBY: How do you handle an ex-son-in-law who "confides" in his 9-year-old and 7-year-old children? My granddaughter came to me yesterday and said her dad told her he's not going to pay child support and is going to quit his job. Now she is worried her daddy will become homeless and have to live on the street.

I know he is self-centered. He has started abusing narcotics and is moving in with a girl half his age. I told my granddaughter that no matter what happens, her mom and dad will always love her. There is court-ordered support, but none has been paid. Any advice would be appreciated.

GRANDPA IN MILWAUKEE

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

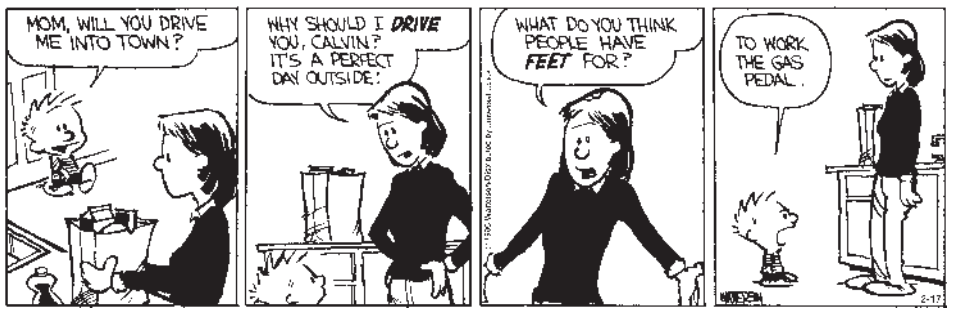
DEAR GRANDPA: "Daddy" is not going to lose his apartment; he has CHOSEN to move in with his girlfriend. That's a lot different than becoming homeless. Reassure your grandchildren, but do not lie. Your daughter should discuss with an attorney the fact that her ex isn't meeting his child support obligation, and contact the state agencies that help to collect it.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

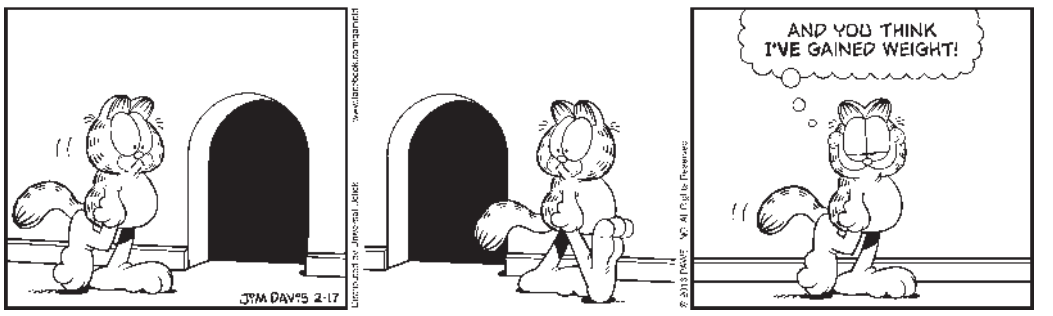
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


MOM, WILL YOU DRIVE ME INTO TOWN?
WHY SHOULD I DRIVE YOU, CALVIN? IT'S A PERFECT DAY OUTSIDE!
WHAT DO YOU THINK PEOPLE HAVE FEET FOR?
TO WORK THE GAS PEDAL.

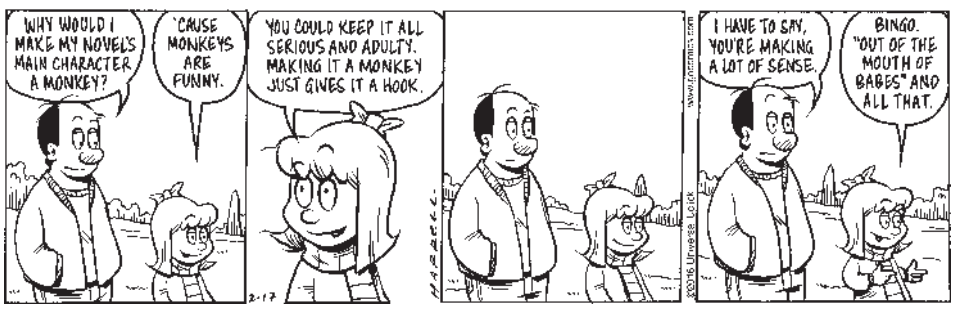
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WHY WOULD I MAKE MY NOVELS MAIN CHARACTER A MONKEY?
'CAUSE MONKEYS ARE FUNNY.
YOU COULD KEEP IT ALL SERIOUS AND ADULTY. MAKING IT A MONKEY JUST GIVES IT A HOOK.
I HAVE TO SAY, YOU'RE MAKING A LOT OF SENSE.
BINGO. "OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES" AND ALL THAT.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WHEN I LOOK AT THE MOON, MY PRIMAL INSTINCTS TELL ME I SHOULD HOWL LIKE MY ANCESTORS.
BUT THEN, WHAT IF I RUIN MY VOICE BEFORE MY "AMERICAN IDOL" AUDITION?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Old portico
5 Mandible
8 Dutch cheese
12 Small pie
13 Year, in San Juan
14 Unspoken feeling
15 Handel's "Messiah," e.g.
17 Frozen desserts
18 Salk's conquest
19 1984 Tom Hanks film
21 Converse
24 Kreskin's claim
25 Small plateau
28 Disposition
30 Ewe's mate
33 Joan of —
34 Ritzy violin
35 Judge Lance
36 Teeny
37 Mozart's "— fan tutte"
38 Pyramid, maybe
39 Zero
41 Despot
43 Seventh planet
46 Autumnal quaff
50 Author — Neale Hurston
51 Casanova
54 "Don't rub —!"
55 Altar constellation
56 Zhivago's love
57 Maxwell Smart's "phone"
58 Jewel
59 Goblet feature

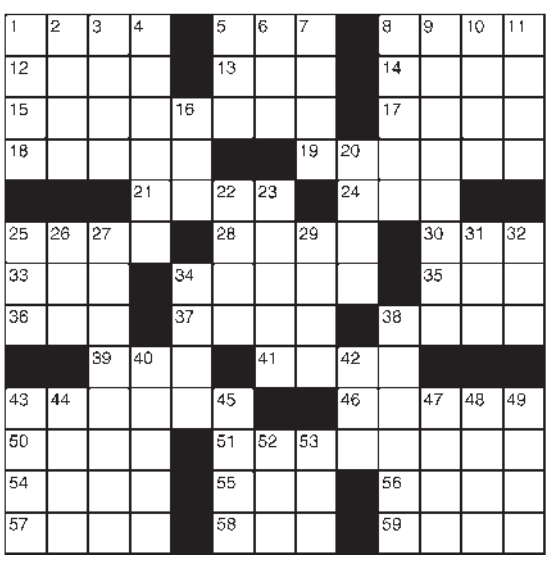
DOWN

1 Desist
2 Poi base
3 Exam format
4 Ancient Greek region
5 Pickle holder
6 Blackbird
7 Courts
8 Wicked acts
9 "Titanic" star Leonardo
10 Fortas and Lincoln
11 Netting
16 Reaction to a light show
20 Mani counterpart
22 Bullets
23 Raise a glass to
25 Gullet
26 Before
27 Plot outline
29 Elevator name
31 $ dispenser
32 Unruly group
34 Rights org.
38 Ordeals
40 Foolish
42 Köln cry
43 Submachine guns
44 Portnoy's creator
45 Dross
47 "Phooey!"
48 Green land
49 Peregrinate
52 Tramcar contents
53 Highland hat

Solution time: 24 mins.

R	A	F	■	■	T	A	G	■	M	I	S	T
A	L	O	U	■	I	D	O	■	A	R	L	O
P	A	R	A	B	O	T	E	D	■	R	C	A	M
■	■	■	T	W	O	■	S	A	■	N	T	S
S	H	A	L	L	■	A	P	I	N	■	■	■
H	O	L	E	■	P	R	E	D	A	T	O	R
O	U	T	■	W	A	L	E	S	■	A	B	E
P	R	O	R	A	T	E	D	■	C	L	O	D
■	■	■	U	G	H	S	■	F	R	E	E	D
C	O	F	F	E	E	■	V	I	A	■	■	■
A	S	O	F	■	T	E	A	R	D	R	O	P
P	H	I	L	■	I	A	M	■	L	C	L	L
S	A	L	E	■	C	U	P	■	E	D	D	Y

Yesterday's answer 2-17



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Ed Sheeran, 25; Joseph Gordon-Levitt, 35; Billie Joe Armstrong, 44; Denise Richards, 45.

Happy Birthday: You will have the discipline to get through any tough challenges. The growth you experience this year will help you jump ahead and pay handsomely for any stress or anxiety you face along the way. Delve in wholeheartedly and make changes that will lead to memorable gains. Take control of your life and positive things will transpire. Your numbers are 4, 15, 22, 24, 35, 42, 47.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Change can be good if you think things through instead of jumping from one place to another without a plan. You will be granted favors and be given options if you ask. Romance and personal improvements should be a priority. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Lighten up, collaborate and compromise. How you deal with people will be the difference between getting what you want and being denied. Aim to finish what you start and try to do so congenially. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Express your feelings and thoughts about self-improvement, philosophy or a new direction you want to pursue. You will get enough feedback to make a suitable choice. Beware of anyone who is trying to convince you to be overly extravagant. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Consider a challenge to be a learning experience and face it head-on. You can gain ground if you are open-minded and willing to take action in support of your goals and beliefs. Make positive changes to an important relationship. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Start conversations that will help a partnership grow. Making positive suggestions and giving others the chance to participate will bring you closer together and help you achieve a bright future. Romance will change your life for the better. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Plan for the future. Accept any changes that come your way, but don't invite risk into your life. Protect your assets and avoid joint ventures involving money or legal matters. Take on a physical challenge that will help ease your stress. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): You'll charm and entice those you come in contact with today. Don't be afraid to use your intelligence and persuasiveness to bring about the changes you would like to see happen. If you want something, ask for it. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Stick close to home and do the things that allow you to use your skills in a creative way. Don't let what others say get to you or interfere with your plans. Avoid disputes and do your best to improve your environment. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Your unpredictable nature will cost you. Be careful or someone will misinterpret what you are trying to say. It's important to stick to projects that promise to bring about positive change. Someone from your past will want to reunite. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Look over contracts and make changes to ensure you get what you want. Taking a strong position when negotiating will work in your favor. Don't let what someone else does affect a decision you have to make. Take care of business your own way. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Children will brighten your day. Do something that gives you the incentive to look and be your best. You'll attract attention and good fortune if you are true to yourself and the ones you love. Make your surroundings more convenient and comfortable. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You'll have trouble figuring things out. Don't fool yourself into thinking that everyone is being honest, loyal or looking out for your best interests. Do your own research before you sign up for something that requires time or money. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are inspiring, pioneering and strong-willed. You are a fearless trendsetter.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

						6	7	
					7	8	9	2
				1	9	4		3
			8	6		5	1	9
		4	1					
5	1	6						
6		3	5					
9			7					
2	4	1	3					

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/17

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	8	2	7	4	3	9	6	5
5	6	9	8	2	1	4	3	7
4	3	7	5	9	6	1	2	8
8	9	1	3	6	2	7	5	4
2	5	4	1	8	7	6	9	3
3	7	6	9	5	4	2	8	1
9	4	3	2	7	8	5	1	6
6	1	5	4	3	9	8	7	2
7	2	8	6	1	5	3	4	9

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/16

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

GLENN FREY (1948-2016) **Solution: 9 letters**

H	S	E	T	S	R	E	T	H	G	I	N	L	A
E	T	E	S	M	U	G	G	L	E	R	S	S	O	I
N	R	G	Y	I	B	L	U	E	S	R	N	R	V	N
L	A	N	S	E	R	H	E	F	I	W	U	U	E	R
E	T	O	C	O	N	N	L	D	O	N	E	O	Y	O
Y	I	L	H	E	L	I	U	T	O	V	A	H	T	F
S	U	E	M	A	P	O	Y	S	I	T	O	J	I	I
A	G	B	I	G	L	T	I	L	Ⓑ	P	Y	D	C	L
E	N	E	T	A	R	T	T	T	E	Ⓐ	E	L	I	A
T	O	R	E	A	A	E	I	A	L	A	Ⓝ	N	N	C
I	L	N	P	E	Q	M	C	P	C	W	D	Ⓓ	D	L
E	W	I	H	U	O	E	I	O	S	A	A	O	Y	E
K	O	E	I	T	F	A	N	S	I	W	E	L	N	T
A	H	L	H	U	N	L	R	I	G	Y	X	E	S	O
T	A	Y	L	O	R	E	H	C	A	T	R	A	E	H

©2016 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com Download the Wonderword Game App! 2/17

Allnighter, Aloud, Band, Belong, Bernie, Blues, Cindy, City, Deacon, Flip, Guitar, Heartache, Henley, Hotel California, Hours, How Long, Janie, Leadon, Lewis, Linda, Live, Love, Lyin' Eyes, Otis, Partytown, Peaceful, Piano, Play, Schmit, Sets, Sexy Girl, Smugglers, Solo, Sunrise, Take It Easy, Taylor, Tequila, The Heat Is On, Timothy, Tour, Walsh

Yesterday's Answer: Handshakes

Treasury 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contain 130 puzzles.)

CLASSIFIED ADS

EMPLOYMENT

BLUE LAGOON REALTY INC: Director of Sales & Marketing. Minimum of ten (10) years Resort' Sales & Marketing management experience required. Minimum of three (3) years Executive position experience. Responsible for planning, developing and implementing Sales & Marketing strategies for all Market segments, including Russian market. Fluent English and Russian. Knowledge of CNMI Travel industry and Russian market required. E-mail resume to info@mangoresort.com. Contact Elly at (670) 989-3325 for more information.

LOOKING FOR
SURROGATES
If you are female between the ages of 21 and 40, have had at least one natural child birth, and are interested in learning more about being a surrogate, please call Evelyn @ 322-0419.
Compensation is over $22,000.
Or receive $500 for referral of qualified candidates.

WORLD INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
(2) GENERAL MAINTENANCE
Salary Rate: $6.05 per hour
QUALIFICATIONS:
- At least 2–3 years experience in a Commercial Building Maintenance. Preferably in Carpentry and Masonry.
- Full-time with flexible working hours

Please mail your resume to PMB 654 Box 10000 Saipan, MP 96950 or contact our Office at Tel.: (670) 233-1545 between 2:30PM to 9:00PM.

JAGUAR LIMITED
DBA: CLUB MERMAID
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
(2) WAITRESS
2-3 years experience as a waitress in a Night Bar or an Entertainment Business.

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS:
- At least 21-25 years old with pleasing personality.
- Full Time with flexible working hours.
- Salary: $6.05/hr
- Preferably can speak Japanese language fluently.

PLEASE MAIL YOUR RESUME to PMB 697 Box 10000, Saipan, MP 96950 or contact our Office at Tel. (670) 233-1545 between 2:30PM – 9:00PM

JAPAN ENTERPRISES CORP.
DBA CLUB MICRONESIA
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
(2) WAITRESS
2-3 years experience as a waitress in a Night Bar or an Entertainment Business.

Other Qualifications:
- At least 21-25 years old with pleasing personality.
- Full Time with flexible working hours.
- Salary: $6.05/hr
- Preferably can speak Japanese language fluently.

Please mail your resume to P.O. Box 502589, Saipan, MP 96950 or contact our Office at Tel. (670) 233-1545

GPPC Marine, LLC.
Job Vacancy Announcement

(02) Able Bodied Seaman
Rate: $6.10 - 6.60/ hour or commensurate to experience and qualifications.

Qualifications: Must be a high school graduate or minimum of two years experience as an Able Bodied Seaman.

The above position will be closed on February 19, 2016.
Interested applicants may apply at GPPC Marine, LLC. Office located at Tun Kioshi, Kileleman Rd. As Perdido, Saipan 96950.
A copy of police clearance must be attached to the application. Incomplete application will NOT be accepted.
Skills testing maybe required.

GPPC Marine, LLC is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Backhoe for Rent
For inquiries, please call **285-0478**
- Security Services
- General Help Supply Services
- Heavy Equipment Rental
- Auto & Heavy Equipment Repair Shop

FOR SALE
Small Restaurant
Including: Equipment and Inventory
Serious buyers only
Call: 285-0649

Warehouse for RENT
REM LOWERBASE
Warehouse #3 - Size: 6,000sq/ft
$0.65 per sq/ft. Negotiable
FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 235-6527/28 or 285-1317

LOOKING FOR OFF CAMERA LINE READER
to read lines Off Camera for actors' NBC Studios comedy showcase audition. FEMALE with good voice. $25 for two hours, plus copy of two takes of your reading. Not an audition.
Saturday, February 20th. If interested, send an email to pccln26@yahoo.com

GARAGE SALE
(Lots of stuff!)
Saturday
Feb. 20, 2016
8:00am – 11:30am
1:30pm – 4:30pm
Beach Garden Estate Hotel & Apartment
Across 13 Fishermen Memorial, Behind Saipan Computer Services
Beach Road, Garapan
Tel: 233-6999

CLICK IT OR TICKET
DAY & NIGHT

Apex Builder's Inc. dba K Parts
Job Vacancy Announcement

(02) Machinist
Rate: $6.10 - $7.60 per hour or commensurate to experience and job qualifications.
Must be a high school graduate with a minimum of two years experience as a Machinist or related field.

(02) Sales Person
Rate: $6.10 - $6.60 per hour
Must be a college graduate with a minimum of two to five years work experience as a sales person. Able to sell merchandises such as, light/heavy vehicles, motor vehicle parts, heavy equipment parts and appliances to consumers. Greet customers and assist their needs and wants, as well as to explain the merchandises and its usage, operation and proper care. Capable of recommending, selecting and helping customers obtain desired and needed products. Calculate prices, tally purchases, compute receivables and process cash and credit payments. Prepare sale slips or sale contracts and place special orders to the suppliers for the customer's desired items. Enjoys dealing with customers and answering their questions regarding the store merchandises.

The above position will be closed on Friday, February 19, 2016. Interested applicants may apply at Apex Builders Inc. office located at Tun Kioshi, Kileleman Rd. As Perdido, Saipan 96950. A copy of police clearance must be attached to the application. Incomplete application will NOT be accepted. Skills testing maybe required.

Apex Builder's Inc. dba K parts is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Marianas Medical Center
is seeking for U.S. qualified workers for the following position:

(1) Radiology Technician
Associate's degree in Radiology from a school approved by the Commonwealth Board of Nurse Examiners (CBNE), with two (2) years of relevant work experience as a Radiology Technician. Must have the ability to take, review, evaluate and operate X-Ray, Ultrasound, Mammogram and Echocardiogram equipment. Must be licensed under Health Care Professions Licensing Board as a Radiology Technician in the CNMI. Must have the ability to work proficiently in a fast paced clinical environment.

Position closes at 5:00pm on Friday, March 4, 2016.
Applications are available at the Marianas Medical Center.
Applications should include a resume and evidence of education degree(s) and professional licenses claimed. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Testing may be required for some positions.
Marianas Medical Center is an equal opportunity employer.

SECTION 8 VOUCHER ACCEPTED

NEW 2, 3, and 4 bedroom energy efficient apartments in Saipan. Lower utility costs up to 70% through solar panels and solar hot water.

NOW LEASING
Starting @ $599/mo.

OPEN HOUSE
MONDAY - FRIDAY • 9AM - 4PM
For pictures, amenities, and application information visit our website
www.ironwoodhousing.com
or call 670-233-4348. Applications are being accepted Monday - Friday, 8:30a.m. to 5:00p.m. and on Saturday, 9:00a.m. to 12:00p.m., at Ironwood Community Center on Middle Road, Gualo Rai.

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), LLC
D.B.A. Best Sunshine

Position: Guest Relations Officer
Number of openings: 5

Job Duties & Qualifications:
- Act as an introducer to plan and coordinate the provision of friendly, efficient services to guests.
  Act as interpreters or translators when patrons require such services.
- Must be a high school graduate or equivalent. Knowledge of the structure and content of the Korean or the Mandarin language preferred.
- Minimum two years of customer service or hospitality preferred.

To apply for this position, you are required to email your detailed resume to
recruitment@bestsunshine.com

WHATZIT Solution: Take a tip from me

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED LINER ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 5-day run in both print and online editions, for as low as $30 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

ADS	(PRINT)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$15	$30
• 5-Liner	$24	$45

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

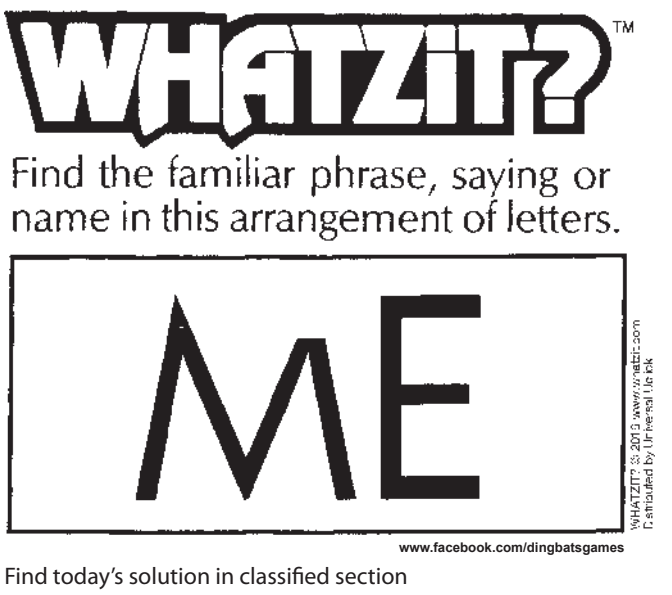
Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.



Find today's solution in classified section

Warriors chase history, teams chase Warriors

AP

Golden State Warriors general manager Bob Myers, left, applauds as Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry (30) Draymond Green (23) and Klay Thompson (11) display their All Star Game jerseys prior to an NBA basketball game against the Houston Rockets Tuesday, Feb. 9, 2016, in Oakland, Calif.

TORONTO (AP)—The Golden State Warriors are chasing history. Everyone else in the NBA is chasing the Warriors.

The defending champions have been so dominant that they could already be a 50-win team this weekend. And unless opponents start figuring out a way to slow Stephen Curry and the league's most potent offense, they could be the best team ever by the time they're done.

Curry and fellow All-Stars Klay Thompson and Draymond Green took time out for fun in the first All-Star Game held outside the U.S., where Curry tossed in the final points in the highest-scoring game ever with a 42-footer to give the West a 196-173 victory.

It won't be long before they get serious again.

"Yeah, obviously, Thursday, Friday, when games start up, put our game face back on and figure out how we're going to try to finish out the season strong and go after another championship," Curry said.

They are 48-4 and will bring an 11-game winning streak into Portland on Friday when their season resumes. Golden State could reach 50 wins - for many clubs, the mark of a very good regular season - with a victory Saturday against the Los Angeles Clippers in what's become perhaps the league's testiest rivalry.

The NBA record of 72 wins, set 20 years ago by Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls, could be in reach.

"If it's there for us we want to get it, but at the end of the day we're trying to win a championship," Thompson said.

There are a couple of teams in the West, and a front-runner in the East that could pose the toughest challenges to the Warriors.

San Antonio, Oklahoma City and Cleveland seem to have the best chances to prevent Golden State from repeating, though the Warriors blew out the Spurs and Cavaliers last time they met.

Business comes before basketball this week, as the trade deadline is Thursday afternoon, a few hours before the season resumes. Contenders will try to load up and disappointments can break up.

From there, there's less than two months before the playoffs begin.

LeBron James dismissed a report this week that the Cavaliers were discussing trading Kevin Love, saying they had enough to win after a turbulent first half that included the firing of coach David Blatt not long after Kyrie Irving had returned from knee surgery.

"Every piece that we have means a lot to the process," James said. "Obviously with myself, Kyrie and Kev, we spearhead the whole thing. We're focused on the main thing and knowing what the main thing is every day, we're going to have a great chance."

So will the Spurs, who are just 3 ½ games behind Golden State at 45-8, and like the Warriors are unbeaten at home. They have won six in a row even while Manu Ginobili is recovering from surgery, as star offseason acquisition LaMarcus Aldridge looks more comfortable playing for his new team.

"We've been winning and we're putting ourselves in a position to be special," Aldridge said. "So that's what it's about."

There's plenty more to watch down the stretch, from Kobe Bryant's final games before retirement to the rookie of the year race between Minnesota's Karl-Anthony Towns and New York's Kristaps Porzingis.

But the focus will never be too far from the Warriors and Curry, who seems headed for a second straight MVP award. Their record-setting start to the season brought unusually high attention to the NBA's pre-Christmas schedule, and a strong finish and a chance at 73 wins would do the same during March Madness.

The record would be nice. The Warriors would prefer another ring.

"I think we just want more. We're not satisfied with winning the championship," Green said. "We think we have something special and it only lasts so long, so we want to take advantage of that and not get complacent. Let's continue to try to get more."

Lions hire QB coach Callahan, former Broncos assistant

ALLEN PARK, Mich. (AP)—The Detroit Lions have hired quarterbacks coach Brian Callahan.

They made the move Monday.

Callahan was an offensive assistant and quarterbacks coach with the Denver Broncos last season, his sixth with the franchise. He was an assistant coach at Serra High School in California and a graduate assistant at UCLA before being hired by the Broncos in 2010.

In Chicago, the Bears have hired Tulane head coach Curtis Johnson as their new wide receivers coach.

The Bears on Monday also hired Rutgers offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Ben McDaniels as Chicago's offensive assistant. The Bears also promoted Pierre Ngo to assistant strength and conditioning coach.

Johnson has been head coach at Tulane for the last four years. Previously, he was wide receivers coach for the New Orleans Saints from 2006-11. He also spent 22 seasons as a college wide receivers coach.

McDaniels previously was an offensive assistant with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. He's also worked for the Denver Broncos.

Meanwhile, the Denver Broncos fiery cornerback Aqib Talib's taunting and face mask fouls proved costlier five days later than they did in Super Bowl 50.

Talib was fined a total of $26,044 on Friday for the flags that he incurred in the first half of Denver's 24-10 victory over the Carolina Panthers.

Teammate Malik Jackson was docked $8,681 for unnecessary roughness in the second quarter and Carolina third-string quarterback Joe Webb was fined $8,681 for unnecessary roughness in the chaotic moments following the final play of the game.

Talib was whistled for taunting in the first quarter, keeping a Carolina drive alive. He later grabbed wide receiver Corey Brown's face mask in the second quarter following a 13-yard catch at the Denver 2, essentially a 1-yard penalty that preceded Carolina's only touchdown.

Afterward, Talib admitted he grabbed Brown's face mask on purpose to send a message and was expecting to get fined, adding: "But hey, we're world champs."

Factoring in fines he was expecting to get and the many $1,800 tickets he bought for friends and family, Talib admitted he probably lost money on Sunday even with the $102,000 bonus check going to each member of the winning team.

Not that it bothered Talib, who made $5.5 million in 2015—minus the $323,529 game check he missed after getting suspended for poking a player in the eye.

"Yeah, but hopefully for the Super Bowl, me and myself, hopefully we made a couple million," Talib said with a smile after posing for a selfie with the Lombardi Trophy. "I'm going to get in the shower y'all. Take care."

SIDEBAR

Bosh dealing with another blood-clot scare

MIAMI (AP)—Chris Bosh of the Miami Heat is dealing with another blood-clot scare, making this the second consecutive year that he's spent the All-Star break facing a most uncertain future because of a health issue.

Bosh will spend "the next few days" reviewing options and no determination will be made about his playing status until he goes through more tests and evaluation, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Monday night. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because neither the All-Star forward nor the Heat have revealed the concerns publicly.

Bosh is Miami's leading scorer at 19.1 points per game this season. He said over the weekend in Toronto that he was optimistic about playing again this season.

Bosh pulled out of the All-Star Game and the 3-point contest over the weekend because of what he and the Heat described as a calf strain. He was shut down at the All-Star break last season because a blood clot had found its way to one of his lungs, and that issue is something that Bosh believes started as a calf problem.

He went to Toronto expecting to participate in All-Star weekend, then was examined there - presumably because of the calf pain - and the NBA subsequently announced on Friday afternoon that Bosh was withdrawing from the game and the 3-point event. Bosh remained in Toronto to cheer on his Eastern Conference teammates, then returned to Miami and met with team medical personnel Monday.

"The biggest thing is his health," Heat teammate Dwyane Wade said Saturday in Toronto, when the speculation was that Bosh was only dealing with a strain. "All in all, as I said last year, it's bigger than basketball. It's about his family and he has to make sure he does everything right. I want to make sure that he's doing whatever he needs to do to be healthy and get back on the basketball court whenever he's ready."

The fact that Bosh remained in Toronto, and was active over the course of the weekend, suggests he's at least optimistic that the problem - whether it's a clot or not - can be managed. He was on the bench for the All-Star Game, was in uniform for the team photo session pregame, accompanied Wade to a dinner that honored Kobe Bryant on Saturday night and moved around without any obvious difficulty.

Last year, that wasn't the case.

"I couldn't walk anywhere," Bosh said in September, describing how the clot affected him. "I was in too much pain."

Bosh has taken precautions over the last year to try and prevent the recurrence of a clot, including partnering with Janssen Pharmaceuticals - the maker of the commonly used blood thinner Xarelto - to educate people about the risks. After the clot last season was found, Bosh started taking that blood thinner for several months as part of his recovery.

Athletes in contact sports typically cannot play while taking blood thinners.

Harvey considering long-term deal with Mets

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (AP)—Matt Harvey appears open to considering a long-term contract with the New York Mets.

"I think whatever comes up is going to come up," Harvey said Monday, two days before Mets pitchers and catchers are due to report for spring training. "I've never shied away from it. I've never said I wouldn't consider it. But I haven't heard anything considering that."

After helping the Mets reach the World Series for the first time since 2000, the 26-year-old right-hander was eligible for salary arbitration for the first time and agreed to a one-year deal worth $4,325,000. He is eligible for free agency after the 2018 season, and his agent, Scott Boras, usually prefers his clients test the market.

Mets general manager Sandy Alderson says he would consider talking about long-term deals with his talented young starting pitchers if there was mutual interest. Jacob deGrom could become a free agent following the 2020 season, and Noah Syndergaard and Steven Matz after the 2021 season. Zack Wheeler, projected back this summer following Tommy John surgery, could become a free agent following the 2019 season.

Harvey was 13-8 with a 2.71 ERA and 188 strikeouts in 189 1/3 innings last year after returning from Tommy John surgery. He went 2-0 with a 3.04 ERA in four postseason starts.

Several pitchers have performed considerably better their second full season after Tommy John surgery. St. Louis Cardinals ace Adam Wainwright went 14-13 with 3.94 ERA in 2012 in his return, then went 19-9 with a 2.94 ERA the following year,

"Obviously you don't have a crystal ball and you can't really predict what the ERA and all those things look like," Harvey said, "but my body feels great, my arm feels great and I think all of us as a staff and as a whole organization feel great about this year," Harvey said.

Harvey said he was excited about the start of the new season.

He last pitched in Game 5 of the World Series, when he lobbied manager Terry Collins to send him back to the mound for the ninth inning with the Mets leading 2-0. Trying for what would have been just the second complete game of his big league career, Harvey walked Lorenzo Cain on a full-count slider, Cain stole second on the next pitch and Eric Hosmer sliced a fastball into the left-field corner for an RBI double.

Closer Jeurys Familia relieved, and the Royals tied the score when Mike Moustakas advanced Hosmer with a groundout, and Salvador Perez hit a grounder to third; Hosmer broke for home as David Wright threw to first and slid in headfirst ahead of Lucas Duda's wayward throw. Kansas City won the title in the 12th inning.

"It's something that motivates and drives you going into the next year," Harvey said. "I think instead of dwelling on what happened and trying to change something that you can't, I think you use that as motivation towards the offseason, towards getting your body ready and getting your mind ready towards a long season and getting back to where you want to be. We have a lot of confidence this year. We have lot of knowledge from last year and experience. ... Obviously If I went back I would throw a different pitch. Everybody wishes they could go back at some point and change things. We're excited to go back. I'm always going to want the ball as much as the next guy is."

AP

In this Saturday, Oct. 17, 2015 file photo, New York Mets pitcher Matt Harvey throws during the first inning of Game 1 of the National League baseball championship series against the Chicago Cubs in New York.

SIDEBAR

Pettitte confident Sabathia can have successful season

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Andy Pettitte is confident former New York Yankees teammate CC Sabathia can be successful this season with a diminished fastball that normally tops out in the upper 80 mph range.

"I am just because I know what he can do," Pettitte said Monday. "I watched him too many times and the command that he has, and stuff like that. I say that because I felt like I was able to do that, and I think he's better than I was. It makes it easy for me to say that."

Pettitte was a guest speaker at a camp for top New York minor leaguers. He was 256-153 in 18 big league seasons, including 219-127 in 15 years with the Yankees.

The 35-year old Sabathia missed the Yankees' loss to Houston in the AL wild-card game last fall when he entered an alcohol rehabilitation program. The left-hander was 6-10 with a 4.73 ERA last year, when he was slowed by his surgically repaired right knee. After returning from the disabled list and using a tighter brace, he went 2-1 with a 2.17 ERA in his last five starts.

"He seems to be doing good," Pettitte said. "He's got a great support group with his family, I know that. I just want to see him be successful, not only on the baseball field, but as a husband, as a dad and in life."

Sabathia has been throwing off a mound in New York. He also addressed the Yankees' minor league camp two weeks ago.

Pettitte threw 30 minutes of batting practice and couldn't stop from laughing when talking about the distance of a couple home runs Aaron Judge hit off him.

Who asked about a comeback, the 43-year-old Pettitte smiled and quickly said "No."

Pettitte said the prospects asked him about topics that included how to handle adversity. He also stressed the need to be a great teammate.

"The talent is one thing, playing the game is one thing, being successful is one thing," Pettitte said. "But the big thing is, I would want them to learn how to be great teammates, to care for one another."

Armando Galarraga has joined the Yankees as a pitching coach in the rookie-level Gulf Coast League.

Mickelson leaves Pebble with optimism and disappointment

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. (AP)—The 5-foot birdie putt to force a playoff at Pebble Beach spun out of the left edge of the cup, and Phil Mickelson couldn't believe it. He bent over and braced himself, the left hand on his knee and the right hand on top of the putter.

"It never crossed my mind that I wouldn't make that one," he said.

That brief image of shock and dismay—Mickelson on the green, the ball still visible because it's not in the cup where it's supposed to be - was reminiscent of a half-dozen or so major championships he felt certain he was going to win.

But let's not get carried away.

The Masters is eight weeks down the road.

This was the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, a big deal to Mickelson for a variety of reasons, but a loss that most likely won't linger.

It was all set up for the 45-year-old Mickelson to join Mark O'Meara as the only five-time winners of the tournament. More importantly, he was poised to end the longest victory drought of his professional career, which now stands at 53 starts worldwide since he won the claret jug at Muirfield in 2013.

He took a two-shot lead into the final round over Hiroshi Iwata of Japan, with only two wins on the Japan Golf Tour to his credit. None of the six players behind him on the leaderboard was among the top 100 in the world, and they had combined for four career PGA Tour titles.

Mickelson, with 42 victories on the PGA Tour, has been around long enough not to take golf for granted. He worked hard Sunday morning with Andrew Getson, his new coach, and felt good about his swing. But he said later that he felt tight, and it showed in his short game.

The finish was vintage Mickelson.

Right when it looked as though he had shot himself out of it, he made a 10-foot par save with as tough an uphill putt as there is at Pebble Beach on the 16th hole. He poured in a 12-foot putt for birdie on the 17th to get within one shot of Vaughn Taylor. And then he was 60 feet from the hole in two on the par-5 closing hole, a chip and a putt away from forcing a playoff against the No. 447 player in the world, who had gone more than 10 years since his last victory.

The chip was fine. The putt looked good. It just stayed out enough to the left to ride the edge of the cup instead of gravity taking over.

Mickelson was left with the 36th runner-up finish of his career around the world.

"I'm certainly disappointed that I wasn't able to put it together," he said. "But it makes me a little bit more determined to get this back to where I want it. Obviously, I'm not quite there yet. Today I played a little bit tighter than I wanted to. I made a few more mistakes in the short game around the greens. I didn't salvage pars the way I wanted to. And it just tells me I still need a little bit of work. But I'm also very close."

In that respect, it was a big step in the right direction.

Mickelson is sitting out Riviera this week because of his kids' spring break. He will be back for the opening two events of the Florida swing, when the road to the Masters truly begins. Mickelson is all about winning, though in his 25th year on the PGA Tour and already a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame, it's all about the majors.

If history is any indication, these chances might not come along as frequently as they once did.

Not only has Mickelson gone 31 months since his last victory, he hasn't really come close to winning very much. He was runner-up in the Masters last year by four shots to Jordan Spieth, and he tied for third in the St. Jude Classic, five shots behind Fabian Gomez.

The year before that, his best chance was the PGA Championship at Valhalla, where he was tied for the lead on the back nine until Rory McIlroy pulled ahead and Mickelson's last chance was to chip in for eagle (he almost did). Mickelson also finished one shot behind in Abu Dhabi at the start of 2014.

He was driving the ball great during the Pebble Beach Pro-Am except for the opening round at Spyglass Hill, where he made an adjustment to his driver to increase spin and it backfired. No harm there. He still shot 68 and changed back. His short game was weak Sunday by his standards, particularly out of the bunker on the par-5 second (that cost him an easy chance at birdie) and the fourth and 14th holes (that cost him easy pars).

Mickelson was gracious as ever in defeat, and he left Pebble with as much optimism as disappointment. In four West Coast starts, he finished second and tied for third.

But this was the first time he stood on the 18th hole with a chance to win in 18 months.

The measure of Mickelson will be how long he has to wait for the next one.

Esdrelon, Fitial get MVP awards

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Blue Haus Ali'i's Elmer Esdrelon poses with his Finals MVP and Mythical Five trophies during the awards ceremony for the San Antonio caging last Saturday at the San Antonio court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Islander's Kelvin Fitial, center, beats teammate Dixon Kwon for the rebound during their east division title game against MJD Enterprises in the San Antonio caging last month at the San Antonio court.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Blue Haus Ali'i's Elmer Esdrelon and Islander's Kelvin Fitial took the coveted Most Valuable Player awards in the 2015 San Antonio Community Action Network Basketball League.

Fitial won the regular season MVP for leading Islander's title conquest in the east division of the league, while Esdrelon was named Finals MVP following his 21-point performance in their 57-49 title victory against Pacific Islands Club last Saturday. Esdrelon received the Finals MVP trophy during the awards ceremony after the Blue Haus-PIC finale last weekend, while league commissioner Boy Garcia got the plum on behalf of Fitial.

Fitial and the Islanders finished the round-robin regular season with second-best 5-2 record and defeated Maplas in the semis and the favored MJD Enterprises in the finals to rule the east division. Fitial averaged 19.5 points in those two wins, making 28 in their semis victory against Maplas and 11 in the division finals versus MJD.

Esdrelon, on the other hand, was the top-scorer in Blue Haus' title win over PIC. He knocked in two triples in the crucial 12-2 run in the fourth quarter to help Blue Haus foil PIC' comeback bid.

Esdrelon's steady performance in the winner-take-all finale made up for his lackluster game in the west division finals against GMJ/IKKI. Esdrelon had a quiet 11 markers against the division champion, failing to score a single field goal in the fourth quarter where GMJ/IKKI fought back.

Meanwhile, the league also handed trophies to members of the Mythical Team and the Best Coach. Esdrelon made it to the elite selection and was joined by PIC's Jack Aranda and Darwin Barbo, GMJ/IKKI's Juan Camacho, and Cholos' Gerald Laguindam. Dan Ray Hernandez was the Best Coach.

Platini fights at FIFA against his 8-year ban

ZURICH—Suspended UEFA President Michel Platini spent eight hours in an appeal case at FIFA headquarters on Monday, fighting his eight-year ban over a $2 million payment approved by Sepp Blatter.

Platini arrived relaxed for his fixture with the FIFA appeal committee by strolling from his nearby hotel into the main entrance.

After a long day with the lawyers in a "very good hearing," the former FIFA presidential hopeful seemed at ease, emerging from his car into icy rain to conduct an impromptu news conference.

"I am rather happy with how it went. As for their interpretation, we'll see how it goes," said Platini, who denies wrongdoing. He is challenging sanctions imposed in December after a FIFA ethics committee hearing which he refused to attend, claiming his guilt was pre-judged.

"This time I was really listened to by people who are part of the football family, who know what the problems are," Platini said, adding that a ruling could be given this week.

Still, the appeals panel chaired by Larry Mussenden—a former attorney general of Bermuda, who is seeking to become a FIFA vice president by winning the CONCACAF presidency in May—rarely overturns verdicts.

FIFA's ethics committee found Platini guilty of accepting gifts, conflicts of interest and breaching loyalty and general conduct rules. He was fined 80,000 Swiss francs ($81,000).

Ethics judges said Platini's argument was "not convincing" that a verbal contract entitled him to get uncontracted salary in 2011 for work as Blatter's presidential adviser from 1999-2002.

Platini said most discussion Monday focused on the nature of the verbal deal with Blatter.

He sought to boost his case by presenting "important" evidence from two witnesses he brought: Angel Maria Villar, a FIFA and UEFA vice president from Spain who chairs the world body's legal committee, and Jacques Lambert, a long-standing friend who heads the French organizing committee of the European Championship.

BLUE

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roster. The list included Trey Dunn, Clayton Izuka, Alex Park, Joshua De Leon, Jonathan Capayas, Edwin Kim, Chad Shankweiler, Joshua Abragan, and Louie Calayag.

On the Japanese side, Kobayashi teamed up with Yeno Tomu, Takumi Kimura, Yoshimori Sugawara, Yoshei Takei, Kentero Tsuchiya, Ryoke Nagano, Shota Kihira, Taisei Taguchi, Ayumu Tabata, and Ryo Kasei. Five new players then started out for the visiting team in the second half.

Though the training pool failed to duplicate the CNMI Boys U18 National Team's 2-1 victory posted against the same group last year, Sekiguchi, according to assistant coach Jersh Angeles, said the Blue Ayuyus played much better than their previous outing with the Japanese team. Several players of the youth team suited up for the training pool that dueled Japan Soccer College yesterday.

"Coach Seki said they played better than last year. He is seeing a lot of improvements in the individual skills of the players, but he wants them to learn how to play better as a team," Angeles said.

"Coach Seki asked the players to be more aggressive on offense and worked together harder on defense," the assistant coach added.

Meanwhile, the training pool will take a break from their practice session today and will be back in action tomorrow as it faces Chuo University Countries at 4:30pm. Angeles hinted that against Chuo University Countries, Sekiguchi may change his lineup.

Chuo University Countries will also play today against Japan Soccer College at 10am, while the latter will challenge the Saipan All-Stars at 5pm.

The series of friendly matches against the Japanese teams will help prepare the Blue Ayuyus for the East Asian Football Federation East Asian Cup 2016 Preliminary Round 1 that will be held this July.

KANOA

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promoting health, sports and teamwork, Kanoa Resort Saipan has taken this great opportunity to become the official host hotel sponsor of the 2016 Saipan Sportsfest," Kanoa Resort Saipan general manager Wendi Herring said.

"Saipan has welcomed dozens of professional triathletes, even Olympians to our beautiful waters and challenging terrain, along with thousands of amateur competitors from around the globe. We look forward to welcoming the participants and working with our industry partners to ensure an enjoyable, challenging, and successful Sportsfest," she added.

For reservations and hotel information, contact the Kanoa Resort reservations department at reservations@kanoaresort.com, or visit kanoaresort.com.

Meanwhile, the Lamar trail is now open for practice rides for XTERRA Saipan, while registration for both Tagaman and the Crown Jewel of XTERRA Tour is still open. Registration can be made online through saipansportsfest.com. Volunteers and homestay hosts are also needed for both races. For more information, contact Kelli Wedd at kelli.wedd@pivot24.com or Tydingco at eric.tydingco@pivot24.com. ***(PR)***

LOKEN

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Meanwhile, three more junior players joined the champions circle in the 2016 White Coconut Tennis Classic after Andy Jung, Anika Camacho, and Susan Sablan prevailed in their respective events, which had a round-robin format.

Andy claimed the boys U10 singles crown after beating Hyun Jin Joo, 8-1, and Min Gi Jung, 9-7.Min Gi finished second as he downed Joo, 8-1.

In the girls division, Camacho topped her field following her victories over Yae Jin Son, 8-2, JC Ferrer, 8-2, and Thaileena Raulerson, 8-2. Raulerson settled for runner-up honors as she finished with a 2-1 record after winning over Ferrer and Son in similar scores, 8-2.

In the girls U12 singles, Sablan was the champion as she went 2-0 following her victories against Michelle Ryu, 6-1, 6-0, and Tae Hee Kim, 6-0, 6-0. Ryu placed second after defeating Kim, 6-2, 6-0.

Pika Festival 65K MTB Race

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

South Korea's Kaon Cho pedals along a dry grass-covered route during last Saturday's Pika Festival 65K MTB Race.

A rider heads to one of the aid stations.

A rider crosses the finish line.

Saipan and Tinian bikers pose with race top finisher Kaon Cho of South Korea, center.

Tinian bikers pose with Korean triathlete Kaon Cho, second right, after the race.

A biker acknowledges volunteers following the riders.

Saipan's Jerome Diyco leads Nap Dizon.

Bikers chat before the race.

Bikers make their turn in one of the jungles along the MTB course.

Volunteers cheer on a finisher.

Warriors chase history, teams chase Warriors

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Loken, Park rule mixed-up doubles

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Peter Loken hits the ball during his and Eugene Park's title match against Martin Jambor and Conatsu Kaga in the mixed-up doubles event of the 2016 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the Pacific Islands Club courts.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Tennis Academy coach Peter Loken and Eugene Park outlasted Martin Jambor and Conatsu Kaga in an extended finale to win the mixed-up doubles title in the 2016 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the Pacific Islands Club court.

Loken and Park dropped the opening set, 4-6, but kept their title hopes alive with a victory in the second in similar scores and then completed the come-from-behind win after eking out a 12-10 triumph in the super tiebreaker third set.

The prolonged title match was Loken and Park's second last weekend as in the quarterfinal round last Saturday, they also needed an extra set to thwart Jeff Race and Allan Lee at the upper half of the draw, 7-5, 3-6, 10-5, to march into the semifinals. In the Final Four, they were pitted against Asia Raulerson and Moris Villanueva and the eventual champions had a hard earned 6-4, 7-5 win last Sunday to set up a title showdown against Conatsu and Jambor.

The pair of Jambor and Conatsu was the lone team left standing at the lower half of the draw, advancing into the finals following a 6-4, 2-6, 10-7 semis victory over Carol Lee and Ericka Tuttle. Earlier in the quarterfinals., Conatsu and Jambor also took three sets to eliminate Tony Kim and the former's younger sister Coume, 6-7, 7-5, 10-3.

Lee and Ericka, posted the third supertie breaker win in the quarterfinal round last Saturday after they outclassed the latter's mother Mihoko and Ji Min Woo, 5-7, 6-2, 10-8. Lee and Ericka went on to round out the Top 3 in the mixed-up doubles after beating Villanueva and Raulerson in the consolation game, 8-6.

See LOKEN on Page 26

Kanoa Resort named host hotel of Saipan Sportsfest

Kanoa Resort Saipan has been named the official host hotel of the 2016 Saipan Sportsfest, according to race director Eric Tydingco.

The resort will offer a discounted rate for all athletes and spectators, including $80 plus tax for standard rooms and $95 plus tax for rooms in its Emerald Tower.

"We'd like to extend a huge thank you to Kanoa Resort and look forward to working with them for the upcoming events," said Tydingco.

"Both the local and off- island athletes are so grateful to have the support from local businesses like Kanoa Resort to enhance their Sportsfest experience!"

Saipan Sportsfest includes two events, the Tagaman Triathlon, scheduled for March 5, and the XTERRA Saipan Championship slated for March 12.

"As one of the CNMI's true sports tourism events with a colorful history of

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JON PEREZ
Off-island triathlete Alan Moore heads deeper into the jungle during last year's XTERRA Saipan Championships.

Blue Ayuyus drops friendly vs Japan Soccer College

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Japan Soccer College avenged its loss to the CNMI last year after pulling off a 1-0 victory against the host's training pool players yesterday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

Hikori Kobayashi scored the lone goal in the friendly match as he converted a header off a corner kick in the third minute. The Blue Ayuyus had a couple of chances to equalize in the second half, but failed to complete the plays. Alan Hinson had the closest opportunity to put the CNMI on the board when he also let go off a header after a corner kick, but Japan Soccer College defenders blocked the ball.

Hinson was among the starters for the Blue Ayuyus, joining goalkeeper Christopher Aninzo, John Diego Masga, James Ermitanio, Kennedy Izuka, Yoshi Mafnas, Evan Belcher, Joel Fruit, Sun Joon Tenorio, Ryan Relucio, and Ryu Tanzawa. The same 11 kicked off the action for the host team in the second half, while coach Kiyoshi Sekiguchi listed nine other players on the Blue Ayuyus'

See BLUE on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The CNMI's Sun Joon Tenorio, second left, stays close on defense against Japan Soccer College's Ryogoku Funaba, left, during the second half of their friendly game yesterday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.